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Division of Homeland Ministries dba Disciples Home Missions

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N. Alexander (Alex) Ruth, Associate Director of Disciples Men

Scott Thayer, Minister of Agencies Serving Youth

2020 President's Report
to the General Board

Rev. Sheila P. Spencer, Interim President

Things have been different this season, in that we've had to do things we've never had to do. Yet what remains the same is this reason: The Church and love of Christ will always come through. We may not be physically worshiping with one another. Yet spiritually we are together and connected to each other. The DHM Community has had to make several adjustments. COVID 19 has brought challenges and changes. But it has also been an opportunity for Disciples Home Missions to be creative and continue to connect people to the life changing love of God.

Since March 17th, the Indianapolis Office Staff of Disciples Home Missions has been working remotely. We have had staff who periodically go into office to check mail and process checks. We are grateful to Lonna Owens, Vice President for Finance, for completing the process for DHM to receive the PPP Paycheck Protection Program loan. Yet, in the midst of multiple transitions, the ministries of Disciples Home Missions continue to find ways to serve the Church. Here are just a few examples:

Our Disciples Chaplains continue to be part of those on the frontlines and our essential workers. Disciples Chaplains serve in a variety of areas: Hospitals, Prisons, Military and Nursing Facilities. Rev. Tom Yates, Chaplain Endorser, coordinates Chaplain Prayer Calls, that serve as a place for chaplains to encourage and lift each other up. They hosted an online virtual retreat. I was able to participate and hear their stories.

This season has called our congregations to enter virtual communities. Ministries Across Generations has provided a wealth of resources. There are resources to celebrate 2020 Graduates, Virtual Mission trip experiences, Virtual Vacation Bible School Resources and more. There are weekly discussion groups for youth and young adult leaders. Each Sunday there is a Virtual Worship and Wonder experience online. They also include resources for adults whose children are home for an extended time. There are helpful resources and information.

Disciples Peace Fellowship host Interns each summer. This year they were innovative and virtual, they helped create curriculum for Reconciliation and created a Virtual Pass the Peace Training.

This year the Scholarship Committee was able to offer extra funds to 2020-2021 scholarship recipients. Amid COVID 19, we know that students are facing additional and

unexpected hardship. We are grateful that they will have these additional funds in the upcoming fall semester.

Our ministry continues to reach out to those who are among the most vulnerable during this season. This includes our Immigrant Sisters and Brothers in Christ. Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley Rea, Director of Refugee and Immigration Ministries collaborates with ministries for Monday Morning DACA prayers each Monday until the Supreme Court Justices release their decision soon on DACA. The Collaboration with Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Valerie Bejar, Specialist in Immigration Responses, the Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries and Capital Region presents IWOBS – Weekly Bible Studies led by Immigrants. This is an innovative way to interact with scriptures from a lens based on immigrant context.

We are grateful for the ministry of our first Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel, Tana Liu Beers. This position was a historic and groundbreaking appointment. This year Tana shared that it was time to move on to what God has for the next part of her journey. We were blessed to call Natalie Teague, her passion and commitment to this ministry was clear to all of us on the Interview Committee. After her two-week session with Tana, she has poured herself into this call.

We are grateful for the ministry of Disciples Women, led by Rev. Dr. Pat Donahoo, who are always on the forefront of ministry and advocacy. Disciples Women's 2020 Bible Study theme is "Hope, Healing and Wholeness" This study resource is especially fitting for the current times and has been a blessing to many. Monday Moment reflections written by IDWM Executive Committee Members offer inspiration and connection. She has recently announced her plans to retire by summer of 2021.

COVID 19 has impacted spring and summer events that have been cancelled. The decisions were based in love and for what is best for the people. Rev. Scott Thayer, who serves as our Minister of Agencies Serving Youth, has postponed the Bethany Bash to next year. He continues to offer resources through the newsletter. Rev. Dr. Bill Lee – Black Ministers Retreat will be virtual for 2021.

Disciples Men led by Rev. Greg Alexander and Rev. Alex Ruth was scheduled to hold Sessions event this summer. They made the decision to offer a virtual presentation of the new Jesus Way material this summer. They have also sponsored the Jesus Way Podcast which can be found at <https://jesuswaymen.net/podcast/>. They have recorded several episodes which address areas such as response to COVID-19 and interview with Rev. Dr. Donahoo to discuss how Disciples Women and Disciples Men hope to work together to develop ministries which support one another, and foster the spiritual development of all people.

GYC and Young Adult Commission – Revisiting – met with leaders of NAPAD, convocation and Obra Hispana. Re-envision the committee and ensuring participation from all parts of the church. Following up with another meeting.

The 2020 Experience was also originally scheduled this summer. This was a collaboration between NAPAD, Obra Hispana and National Convocation. Merger Staff, Rev. Dr. R. Wayne Calhoun Sr., Rev. Chesla Nickelson and Rev. Sheila Spencer are an important part of this process. The Education Committee was formed to create workshops for this historic event. Many of the workshops included leadership by Disciples Home Missions Staff including Disciples Volunteering, Green Chalice, Disciples Women, and others. The event has been postponed to 2022. However, the National Convocation held a virtual gathering this summer to conduct business.

During this time, I have been intentional to connect and encourage staff. DHM purchased monitors for our staff General Ministries and from the Regional Ministers. We share updates on the resources offered by our ministries during this time. DHM has contributed to many of the ministries and resources offered on the Disciples Response to the COVID 19 pandemic. For example, Rev. Warren Lynn has offered multiple resources through The Well Fed Spirit. He has also created a virtual map for congregations that offer virtual worship services. This is an opportunity for Disciples to enjoy several worship services from their Disciples congregations.

We continue to navigate this new normal. Grateful for staff who have made the adjustments for this season. I have been emphasizing giving ourselves grace and being flexible. We have been intentional by extending holiday weekends for self-care. We have also been in solidarity with other general ministries to support staff's ability to vote by being closed on Election day or similar phases. We are navigating through multiple pandemics. I have shared just a glimpse into the multiple ways that the Ministries of Disciples Home Missions have been serving the community in the midst of this season.

DHM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(date indicates end of term)

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Agencies Serving Youth
Rev. Scott Thayer, Minister

2020 posed significant challenges to youth serving agencies throughout the nation.

Both Scouts-BSA and Girl Scouts USA cancelled their national meetings during 2020. Scouts-BSA postponed its US National Jamboree for at least a year. International Scouting events have likewise been postponed or cancelled. The Scouts-BSA National Office of Relationships has been severely cut back, as well as the International Department of Scouts-BSA. The National Religious Relationships Committee is still operational, however, and I continue to serve as a participating member of its Chaplaincy sub-committee. The committee meets via Zoom.

Scouting units that are chartered to Disciples congregations have been hampered significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some units have ceased meeting altogether. There are some units that have been actively engaged in the religious emblems program provided by P.R.A.Y. (Programs of Religious Activities for Youth). Some 900,000 youth and adults of all religious persuasions have earned religious emblems through P.R.A.Y. since that organization's founding. Written statements of recognition have gone out from the DHM office to youth who have earned their religious emblems.

We continue to issue our electronic newsletter to members of the Association of Disciples Scouts and Scouters (ADSS). This is a cooperative effort between the Disciples Minister of Youth Serving Agencies and P.R.A.Y. It has stimulated vital connections between our Scouting units and the Duty to God program. The newsletter provides information about activities and events in which Disciples Scouts and Scouters can participate. It offers useful ideas about unit administration and best practices. The ADSS membership continues to grow as Disciples ministers and Scout leaders are identified throughout the nation.

According to national Scouts-BSA statistics, 344 Cub Scout Packs, 403 Boy Scout Troops, and 47 Venturing Crews are chartered to Disciples congregations nationwide, for a total of 18,610 youth served. 8,389 adult leaders are associated with these units. This does not include many other units and individuals that are chartered to non-church institutions. Parallel statistics for Girl Scouts USA are not available.

Unfortunately, the youth encampment at Bethany, WV that had been planned was cancelled due to COVID-19. It is hoped that "Bethany Bash" will become a reality in the near future.

Currently, we are compiling a master list of persons interested in the Disciples Scouting programs. Names and email addresses are being brought together in a distribution list that will serve as the roster of persons who will receive the quarterly newsletter. They will also be encouraged to join the Association of Disciples Scouts and Scouters.

As I conclude this program report for the year, I want to say that there are some wonderful things happening in our Disciples churches and the youth organizations they sponsor, despite the problems posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The following is a brief story to illustrate this:

Jameson Rapp is a young man who is a member of Scouts-BSA, East Texas Council, Troop 335, sponsored by First Christian Church of Tyler, TX.

Jameson completed his Eagle project, a hammock park, this past July 25th at Disciples Crossing, the denomination's largest regional camp in East Texas. Jameson grew up in the church and was active in Disciples summer camps. He has always wanted to give back to the camp which has meant so much to him. The new hammock park is located in a shaded area under a large group of trees along a slope that overlooks the camp's main lake.

Despite significant obstacles, Jameson persevered and completed his eagle project. His story is only one of many that could be related. The energy of our Disciples youth is as robust as ever. Important projects are being accomplished in our communities that benefit everyone. We will survive this pandemic, and our youth will help lead the way to a better day for us all.

This concludes my report for 2019-20. I remain grateful to be able to serve in this capacity and I eagerly solicit any and all suggestions that could enhance this important work in our church.

Appalachian Scholarship Ministry

Lon Oliver, Administrator

On January 1, 2018, Kentucky Appalachian Ministry's name was changed to *Disciples Appalachian Scholarship Ministry* with Lon Oliver being called as the administrator. This ministry will seek to promote and award the distribution of college scholarships to Appalachian students attending Bethany College and Barton College. In addition, the administrator of the program will seek to grow the endowment funding the scholarships and create a cohort for all scholarship recipients. *Disciples Appalachian Scholarship Ministry* is a ministry of the Christian Church in Kentucky and Disciples Home Missions. The following students are scholarship recipients for Disciples Appalachian Scholarship Ministry for the 2020-21 academic year.

College:	Barton College
Recipient:	Nathan McKenrick (3 rd Year of Scholarship)
Amount:	\$3,000 for the academic year.
Note:	Nathan will be remaining in our cohort for the 2020-21 academic year and the continuation of his scholarship.
College:	Bethany College
Recipient:	Haddae Allen (3 rd Year of Scholarship)
Amount:	\$3,000 for the academic year.
Note:	Haddea has been very active in the life of her faith community and has had two good years at Bethany.

College: Bethany College
Recipient: Noah Gill (3rd Year of Scholarship)
Amount: \$3,000 for the academic year.
Note: I have visited both on the phone and in person with Noah and he looks forward to his journey with us.

College: Bethany College
Recipient: Emma Gress (2nd Year of Scholarship)
Amount: \$3,000 for the academic year.
Note: Emma was selected to be a new scholarship recipient from Bethany last. She has a strong church background.

College: Bethany College
Recipient: Aubree Gray (3rd Year of Scholarship)
Amount: \$3,000 for the academic year.
Note: Aubree has been excited about our program. She will be returning to Bethany College and will remain in our cohort for the 2020-21 academic year.

College: Bethany College
Recipient: Anna Heller (3rd Year of Scholarship)
Amount: \$3,000 for the academic year.
Note: Anna had a good first year and has met our academic requirements.

College: Bethany College
Recipient: Olivia Zinn
Amount: \$3,000 for the academic year.
Note: Olivia is a first-year student.

College: Bethany College
Recipient: Marci Mazza Fredley
Amount: \$3,000 for the academic year.
Note: Marci is a first-year student.

College: Bethany College
Recipient: Madison Dressel
Amount: \$3,000 for the academic year.
Note: Madison is a first-year student from Pennsylvania. She attends the Christian Church of Connellsville.

College: Midway College
Recipient: Zach Gibson
Amount: \$3,000 for the academic years.
Note: Zach is a second-year student.

I traveled to Bethany College last fall. I remain confident that our decision to *direct our scholarships to Barton College and Bethany College* is the right course. I will be visiting with our student at Barton and students at Bethany by Zoom and, as soon as the coronavirus situation allows, setting a date for our cohort gathering. For the 2020-2021 academic year we will be offering ten scholarships totaling \$30,000.

Disciples Chaplains Association

Chaplain Tom Yates, Chaplains Endorsing Officer

Ordained and Commissioned clergy endorsed for chaplaincy ministries in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are a uniquely called, gifted, trained, and experienced community ministering in nearly every Region of the denomination. Over 350 Federal (Army, Navy, Air Force, Veterans Administration, and Federal Bureau of Prisons) and Institutional (hospital, hospice, community police and fire department, retirement center, pastoral counseling practice, workplace/industrial, state and local prisons/jails) chaplains are currently serving the mission and ministry of the church outside the bounds of local congregations. They perform and provide for ministry that is both special and specialized. Chaplains minister in places where other clergy may not have access or ability. Even so, as with other Disciples clergy, chaplains are accountable and connected to the denomination through either Regional Ministers and Commissions on Ministry (Institutional Chaplains) or the General Commission on Ministry (Federal Chaplains).

The role of the Office of Chaplaincy and Specialized Ministry and the Disciples Chaplains Endorsing Officer is to administer the ecclesiastical endorsement process required by federal entities and most healthcare and other employers where chaplains are engaged. Through an online application process that includes demographic information, a call to ministry/life sketch, college and seminary transcripts, Regional Minister reference and three additional personal ministry references along with a personal telephone interview with the endorser we are able to review and confirm a candidate's qualifications and readiness to represent our denomination in chaplain ministry. In addition to this statutory duty, our ministry engages with denominational chaplains through regular supportive care, communication, prayer, and encouragement. It is in this context where we sense, see, and feel the movement of the Spirit every day.

In the face of extraordinary challenges faced by chaplains this year as a result of the national COVID-19 pandemic many have had their ministries radically impacted. Some have carried on their work from home, others have been thrust into the middle of extraordinary circumstances while ministering to patients, family members, and staff dealing directly with critical illness and death. Their experiences and stories are of amazing and effective ministry under the most difficult of conditions.

In response we have undertaken monthly Zoom calls with chaplains from across the Disciples Chaplains community to provide an opportunity for connection, conversation, the sharing of information, and prayer. We see each other face to face and hear firsthand the joys and concerns that are surfaced.

A special highlight of our ministry this year is a virtual Chaplains Retreat that occurred in late September. Originally envisioned as a "Chaplains Camp" at Christmount Retreat Center, the event was re-imagined as an online Chaplains Professional Development opportunity. With sponsorship from Disciples Home Missions and the Pension Fund of the Christian Church and a video greeting from Rev. Dr. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and President, the chaplains felt especially connected to and supported by our church. The theme was "Rhythms of Rest" and keynote leadership was provided by

Jonathan Fisher, Disciples Endorsed US Army Chaplain and Certified Clinical Chaplain Educator.

The priorities of our church, especially for ministry in the larger global and community context are advanced daily as chaplains labor in ecumenical, inter-faith, diverse, and multi-cultural settings. That is what chaplains do every day. God's dream for inclusive, loving, healing, and caring relationships and acts of ministry is the baseline for every member of our Disciples Chaplains. Our church and the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ is well served by this extraordinary group of servant leaders.

We are very proud to work with and represent this incredible group of Disciples clergy. We thank the Disciples Home Missions Board and the General Board for the continued support, prayers, and encouragement that we receive from our denomination.

Office of Christian Vocations
Warren Lynn, Executive Minister

The nature of ministry through the Office of Christian Vocations is expressed mostly through areas related to Search and Call (*clergy relocation*), Ministers Directory (*clergy credentialing*), and Ministry Educational/Formation (*Scholarships & Grant programs for students and credentialed clergy, & Spiritual Formation resources*). Those of us with responsibilities in this office, including Ministry Associates, strive to provide those who are using our ministries with a fruitful outcome for their life and vocational calling.

Within the day-to-day responsibilities of this ministry, there is much detail-oriented work, troubleshooting of complexities and needed attention to minutia. For such, I count on the three Ministry Associates of this office to offer a high degree of professionalism. I am grateful Brenda Tyler, Anne Marie Moyars and Kelly Harris each offer significant and generous service to those who need our care. These Ministry Associates empower our ministry to be trustworthy, compassionate, just, and fair.

Each year, we evaluate systems for highest priority needed updates to improve efficiencies, create a more-helpful system for users, and incorporate new technologies. In 2020, we once again integrated new tools to allow for increased automation of information sharing between regions and DHM, regarding clergy credentials, status, professional and personal information. This facilitates a more-effective means to maintain up to date information about clergy at regional and general offices. It also facilitates the effective discernment of congregations seeking next pastoral leadership.

Of course, the elephant in the room this year has been the global pandemic. The realities of COVID-19 have significantly impacted what had been our usual office culture. As of the writing of this report, each staff person has been working remotely (from home) for many months. For OCV's part, we've created strategic ways to digitally maintain the portions of information that used to be kept in hard-copy format. We've digitized previously physical resources. And, found ways to increase efficiency without losing effectiveness. For instance, a physical poster set with stickers we sell, that

search committees use to keep congregations informed on their progress to call a next pastor, has been digitized and made available for congregations to use for free in their digital communication. Anne Marie Moyars negotiated with our vendor supplying ministry lapel pins and other resources to ship all orders directly from vendor's office to those ordering these materials; this effort decreases the time for orders to be fulfilled, as well as maintaining staff safety during the pandemic.

Within our OCV ministry, intentional means for maintaining communication and collegial relationship, via regular virtual meetings and electronic check-ins, has become an intentional endeavour. All in all, though, our efforts have continued with little to no negative effect on our ministry to the church. Search and Call is as busy as ever. The work of the Ministers Directory office continues to meet the needs of the church for documenting and reporting clergy information. I personally, continue to facilitate the questions, concerns and needs of clergy who reach out for connection, a listening ear and wisdom around matters regarding their place in Disciples vocational ministry.

I continue to be asked if Search and Call has seen a decline in activity due to the pandemic. As far as I can tell, the answer is "no." Clergy continue to seek new/next Calls at an active pace. Congregational Search Committees continue to seek clergy profiles to fill open positions. A positive note in this is that we are witnessing local search committees rise to the challenge of this time by crafting creative virtual processes for interviewing, evaluating, and selecting next pastors for their congregations. However, a note of concern in this time is for the several clergies who are now in Search and Call due to termination because they resisted pressures from lay-leadership to go back to normal in-person worship with little or no modification to how such would happen, or whether PPE would be required. The office of vocational ministry has sought to work with greater care and sensitivity to the significant increase of stress, trauma and anxiety experienced by many clergy who are currently in, and will be entering, Search and Call.

One novel idea OCV has developed and implemented arose out of a consistent inquiry of pastors asking other pastors how they were creating and providing virtual worship services. This, combined with others simply asking who was doing virtual worship, gave me the idea to create a virtual map of North America, that provided links over the locations of DOC congregations who were providing virtual worship services. The links on the map go to those places online (*FB Live, YouTube, proprietary sites, etc.*) where live virtual services could be found or accessed. The map has slowly gained momentum, with currently over 300 congregations linked on the map. There are also links to larger denominational offerings in the area of virtual worship, including Disciples Net, Ministry Across Generations, and Children Worship & Wonder virtual experiences.

The opening page of the map can be found at:

<http://www.wellfedspirit.org/virtualworship/index.html>

We are hearing from many local pastors who mention how much they enjoy worshipping (*virtually*) with congregations of various colleagues across the denomination through the use of the map. They speak of being able to just go to worship and be fed, in a way that

doesn't happen when they are the pastor leading a congregation in worship. These virtual connections facilitate an ability for worshipful nurture of our clergy, in a way that geographical distance had previously prohibited before worship went online across the church. The map also gives access to learning from the methodologies of other colleagues in ministry in real time.

The resulting effects of the pandemic have especially shown up in a unique need for increased attention to other areas of ministry within OCV. While our Clergy Continuing Education and Seminarian Scholarship programs have been honed to run well through the last many years, due especially to the administrative work of Kelly Harris, we have had to work diligently this year to facilitate these programs amidst grand changes to the wider educational landscape. A few of the circumstances this year included unforeseen need to quickly virtualize still-traditional in-person seminary training programs, temporary suspensions of normal class schedules, and the resulting seminarians' challenges to meet DHM's stated requirements for awards. So also, cancelled continuing education events left clergy scrambling to find alternative, often virtual, programs that still met ongoing professional needs, as well as requirements to make use of continuing education funds already awarded. In all of these circumstances, DHM staff worked diligently, and I would say effectively, to provide an accountable flexibility so funds did not usually have to be returned. Resultingly, seminarians and pastors have been able to count on the blessings of our financial support to meet ongoing education needs.

Throughout this last year, we've again experienced an increase in use of our Ministry Position Listing tool by regions. This may be partially attributed to almost weekly announcements of position listings via the DOC clergy FB group.

Also, with the increased need for pastors to develop creative solutions for congregational nurture and spiritual life, the Well-Fed Spirit Website: www.wellfedspirit.org continues as a helpful source for clergy who are looking for programmatic and liturgical ideas. Along this same line, I now regularly offer and promote the free use of my personal photographs I've taken (over 20,000 now stored on my Flickr site: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/warrenlynn/>) for use by pastors and congregations as they develop digital media resources for virtual worship, education and congregational life. I see this as an extension of not only a personal hobby, but also in line with the ministry of my office to support the work of local ministries and leaders.

A significant area of change this year has been the cancellation of scheduled travel events to provide in-person leadership. Several denominational and ecumenical events were postponed, and then ultimately cancelled. While unfortunate and not desired, these cancellations have been graciously understood by everyone I've talked to as the thing we had to do out of faithful caution and care. The result was less in-person leadership efforts. A point of redemption, however, has been that such also made more time for responding to increased individual needs of clergy and other church leaders reaching out for support. Quite frankly, event cancellations did not leave extra time in the schedule, but simply allowed room for different, emerging needs to be met. I actually

think the ministry that is being accomplished, as a result, is more effective and needed than the in-person events may have been. Such has been a reality through which I've seen signs of G_d's unfolding dream of redemption for our ministry.

I believe these last many months have taught me that past ways of doing General Ministry, corporately, may now be an outdated mode for even when the pandemic is no longer a concern. I do miss and value the need for DHM staff to be in person with each other on a regular basis. But I also no longer believe such requires always being in the same office space together, 5-days every week. My own ability to proactively fulfill the ministry of my office, undistracted by the busyness of a shared office space, has benefitted by a physically-dispersed DHM.

So, I wonder, once the pandemic is over, once there is a vaccine to secure the physical safety of all, especially those of us with underlying medical risks, once the church can do whatever we want to do without risking the safety of those to whom, and with whom, we minister ... I wonder if allowing this past year to inform creative possibilities for the structure of DHM's corporate and office reality might be a foundational springboard for increased ability to live into G_d's unfolding dream for us. As one of many wonderings (*simply one small example*), I wonder if an encouragement to each physically base our ministry with less attention to some formally sanctioned physical headquarters, and more attention to how we best can live into closer alignment with G_d's dream might produce a transformative experience. Does it free us to move into spaces where we are more-needed, rather than being insulated by the walls of a high-rise office building?

Does it empower us to consider increased partnership with other DOC ministries beyond the walls of the Disciples Center? Does it free up financial resources in the long run to provide more resource for what we do rather than where we do it? How do we find a new hybrid balance of the real need for being in physical proximity as a staff, without the culture of physical proximity taking priority over a larger vision for ministry? I don't necessarily have answers here, but I think the questions are worthy of honest consideration.

As it has been in past years, and continues to be so even today, and with a vision for such into the future, the Christian Vocations office is fully committed to serve professionally and effectively, as partner and initiator within DHM, so all leaders in the Christian Church are more able to be who G_d calls us to be in this world. May it be so.

Children Worship & Wonder

Rev. Lisa A. Engelken, Coordinator

CW&W is a place to listen to God, talk to God, and be with God. My dream is to help every child understand that they are enough. That every child matters to us and to God. In these centers whether in a church room or virtual room we (adults) can witness these experiences. So, the goal for CW&W is to keep creating these spaces for our families and children.

CW&W's main objective is to provide a special place for children to be with God. With the trainings we equip and empower leaders of our church to help create these sanctuaries. We had 12 trainings/consultations scheduled in 2020. Because of the pandemic in March, we quickly followed suit and decided not to offer any in person trainings. CW&W offered one Zoom Virtual Training in September. In October we decided to continue closed CW&W trainings with CDC restrictions due to COVID-19 to those states that are allowing in person gatherings.

Children Worship & Wonder offers two types of trainings: Open Training for all area churches and Closed Training for the staff and members of one church. After completion of 11-12 hours of training DHM certifies the registrants as a CW&W storyteller. CW&W does also offer consultations.

Other activity in CW&W is:

1) We held our annual gathering of Trainers in Florida at The Retreat @ Silversprings last November 3-6, 2019. They recently had converted one of their smaller buildings into a CW&W Worship Center. Twenty CW&W Trainers gathered for our worshipful work together, retreat and fellowship.

2) CW&W started to record Trainers telling the stories out of Young Children Worship and Wonder by Sonja Stewart and Jerome Berryman. We found that this became a blessing in the year 2020. MAG created a YouTube channel and started sharing these CW&W stories with the larger church to be used in virtual worships as children's messages or with the churches work with families.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL10TN4Jh_3Pa0wEGXTeFSg

3) In March Lisa Engelken along with Olivia Updegrave started to offer Family Worship experiences via Zoom on Sunday mornings at 12:30. We offered this ministry to families across the United States and Canada as churches were finding new ways to worship together virtually. We offered these weekly gatherings through Pentecost.

4) In 2019 CW&W was working on launching the Disciples Family Faith @ Home. We will offer church season boxes: Advent/Christmas, Epiphany, Lent/Easter, Ordinary Time. Olivia Updegrave and Lisa Engelken launched our first prototype/trial for Lent 2020. Then when these boxes were already in the homes during the at home orders in many states, we quickly realized we needed to work on more Family Faith @ Home stories due to the pandemic. We launch Disciples Family Faith Summer Parables and now have introduced The Advent Journey.

Disciples Family Faith Boxes - Advent at Home: Orders placed by October 14 - \$40.00
(e-mail wshuffitt@dhm.disciples.org)

Includes the SEVEN following stories: How the Church Tells Time, Prophets, Elizabeth, Mary & Joseph, The Shepherds, Christmas, and The Magi.

The stories will include felt, cardstock, and activities and manipulatives to prepare for Advent, celebrate Christmas, and move into Epiphany!

Disciples Center for Public Witness

Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston, Ph. D., Executive Director

The top priorities of DC4PW remain racial and economic justice and those critical issues that intersect with these primary concerns. And in this year of COVID-19, economic collapse, and contentious national elections in the U.S., we have had to make changes and adapt to the “new normal.” Thus, the main activities of DC4PW have been in the areas of communications, coalition-building and civic engagement.

We have added two new platforms, one for fundraising and one for advocacy, as well as enhanced our database to make available to all team members more information about donors, partners, and friends of DC4PW. At the same time, we continue to expand our outreach to active and potential justice advocates through our weekly e-news, our frequently updated web page, and our increased use of social media.

In the U.S., we have been focused primarily on two things: the elections and the ongoing efforts against racism and poverty. In partnership with DJAN (Disciples Justice Action Network), we launched our Faithful Decision 2020 election-year program, one that concentrated on voter information, voter registration, encouraging people to vote, voter protection, and issue education. We also co-sponsored an online interfaith panel on voter suppression and voter protection, which had 1000 viewers.

In the post-election period, DC4PW helped produce and widely distribute an interfaith letter calling for all votes to be counted, for people to practice peace and patience, and for all people to begin coming together and working together to heal our nation and move ahead in the shared project of building the Beloved Community.

In the areas of racial and economic justice in the U.S., DC4PW worked closely with the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, promoting and participating in a number of physical and virtual events, and advocating to lawmakers about issues of specific concern to this powerful moral movement. We also promoted and participated in a number of events organized by the Black Lives Matter movement.

In Canada, we continue to work closely with our sister organization, the Disciples Centre for Public Witness in Canada. With and through this ministry, we maintain partnerships with Kairos Canada and Citizens for Public Justice, working on issues such as poverty, creation care, and the rights of First Nations.

In closing, DC4PW would like to thank Disciples Home Missions for serving as our fiscal sponsor, providing us with institutional policy guidance, and allowing us to serve with incredible colleagues in its amazing community of diverse ministries; thank the Office of the General Minister and President for graciously continuing to sponsor and guide us as

a recognized ministry of the church; and thank the Division of Overseas Ministries for our wonderfully strong and ever-growing partnership in education and advocacy on issues of global concern.

Disciples Men

Greg Alexander, Director
Alex Ruth, Associate Director

The calendar year, 2020, began with much promise for Disciples Men and the General Conference of Disciples Men. Like every aspect of life today, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed our plans.

The Annual Meeting of the General Conference of Disciples Men (GCDM) was held virtually.

Sessions 2020, the GCDM denominational men's event that occurs every four years, was canceled. We are grateful for the extraordinary amount of work by Ron Petrick and the Sessions 2020 planning team that ended being for naught.

Alex and Greg were scheduled to keynote a number of regional men's gatherings. They became brief virtual presentations or canceled altogether.

Without a doubt, the impact of the pandemic did diminish some of the new momentum of Disciples Men...but not all of it.

The Office of Disciples Men released three new congregational, small-group, men's resources in 2020 under the title *The Jesus Way Journey*. These are the first small-group men's study resources released from the Office of Disciples Men in well over forty years. The feedback received from those who are using the resources is quite encouraging. Three more resources are scheduled to be released in early 2021.

The Disciples Men Podcast has been a great resource for connecting men to our new resources, the work of the GCDM, our denominational leaders, and a new standard of non-patriarchal accountability and partnership.

Greg and Alex were very aware that *The Jesus Way Journey*, while striving to be inclusive, was nonetheless developed by two white men. The Office of Disciples Men applied for *and received* an Oreon E. Scott Grant to develop new men's resources. The grant will allow us to assemble a team of men from the National Convocation, NAPAD, and Obra Hispana to work with Greg and Alex in the development of these new resources. The travel and gathering restrictions resulting from the pandemic has delayed the start of our project. The grant specifically funds the coming together of these men in a retreat setting to develop the trust relationships necessary to make this kind of journey. We will launch this project as soon as it is safe to do so.

It is important to note the full-throated support this initiative received from the GCDM. They have pledged to cover any shortfall in the resources we need to achieve the stated goals of the grant. We are so grateful for their enthusiastic support.

Where do you see signs of God's unfolding dream for this ministry?

The Office of Disciples Men operates on the conviction that authentic Christianity for men must be pro-reconciling/anti-racist and non-patriarchal. We believe *The Jesus Way Journey* resources are a great beginning to a non-patriarchal understanding of authentic Christian manhood today.

The Oreon E. Scott Grant will help us move towards achieving our conviction of becoming pro-reconciling/anti-racist along with non-patriarchal men of faith.

"Assuming anything's possible, where do you see possibilities for closer alignment to God's dream?"

Continued pursuit of the resources we have outlined will bring us closer to realizing our dream.

Disciples Peace Fellowship
Rev. Brian Frederick-Gray, Director

At Disciples Peace Fellowship our mission is "Living Out the Gospel Imperative for Peace and Justice!" We bring this mission to life by embracing three verbs that push us into action: equipping, connecting, and advocating.

We equip individuals, congregations and organizations to pursue peace and justice work through education, support, and collaboration.

We connect people and organizations who share in the work of fighting injustice and oppression throughout the world while working for peace.

We advocate for positive change in the world and walk alongside those who are working for peace and whose voices have been ignored for too long.

The year 2020 has been unlike any other. The COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing, remote working, and travel restrictions have radically redefined how we connect, how we do ministry, and how we serve. That is particularly true for the 2020 DPF Peace Interns. In a typical year Disciples Peace Fellowship sends three young adults to church camps all over the United States and Canada to serve as ambassadors for peace and justice. With the COVID-19 pandemic, that simply wasn't possible. Instead, 2020 DPF Peace Interns Wendy Davidson, Raphael Guillen, and Jennifer Williams spent the summer working remotely, partnering with Disciple Justice Ministry groups, and connecting with online camps and conference. It was not the summer experience any of us expected, but the 2020 Peace Interns did remarkable work connecting, equipping, and advocating for peace and justice in innovative and exceptional ways.

Here are a few highlights from the work of the 2020 DPF Peace Interns:

- Wendy, Jennifer, and Raphael worked with Rev. April Johnson from Reconciliation Ministry to develop an interactive, online, choose-your-own-adventure, anti-oppression Bible Study resource called “A Parallel Journey.”

It is just as incredible as it sounds! They spent the entire summer meeting together, working collectively, and developing this remarkable resource that can be used as a personal devotion, for small group study/discussion, or even as a worship resource in place of a traditional sermon. You can find it at bit.ly/APARALLELJOURNEY

- The 2020 Peace Interns also partnered with the Disciples News Service to create feature articles about Disciples Justice Ministry cohort group members as part of the #DOCjustsummer Campaign. All told they created 10 featured articles detailing the work of 14 unique justice ministry groups of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Many thanks to Cherilyn Williams for working so closely with the Peace Interns on this project and giving them this opportunity. You can find the articles at disciples.org/resources/justice/docjustsummer-2020
- Further, the 2020 Peace Interns partnered directly with a number of Disciples Justice Ministry groups to work on specific projects over the course of the summer. This included working with AllianceQ on resources for welcoming Transgender and Nonbinary folks into the life and ministry of the church, partnering with Green Chalice in developing resources for their online camp, and helping Refugee & Immigration Ministry with their #40for40 social media campaign (sharing stories of congregations engaged in resettlement ministries).
- Though all in person camps were cancelled this summer, the Peace Interns were able to connect with a handful of online camps. This took many forms. Sometimes they served as camp staff, other times they were outside presenters leading a specific workshop and/or delivering a pre-recorded video keynote.
- With the support of a generous grant from Week of Compassion, DPF hosted an intergenerational, peacemakers training event called “Passing the Peace!” In the midst of the pandemic this was re-imagined as a virtual event at the end of the summer that served as a capstone project for the 2020 Peace Interns. This multi-day event gave Wendy, Raphael, and Jennifer an opportunity to share the workshops and resources that they had developed over the course of the summer. There were five total sessions featuring peacemaking resources addressing the issues of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Intersectional Justice, Eco-Justice, LGBTQIA+ Pride, and Anti-Oppression/Pro-Reconciliation Work. All five recorded sessions are available at www.disciplespeace.org/passingthepeace.

While DPF is best known for the Peace Intern program, we have engaged in innovative work in other areas as well. Members of the Executive Committee created a “Facilitating Conversations about Justice” video resource. We also created a “This is DPF!” video resource that details the history of Disciples Peace Fellowship, the testimony of Rev. Bruce Ervin (the very first Peace Intern!), and accounts of those who have benefited

from DPF's programming over the years. Our Mission Director, Rev. Brian Frederick-Gray, accepted the role of co-facilitator of the Disciples Justice Ministries cohort group. Even in the midst of the pandemic, DPF's focus on partnering, equipping, and advocating continues to lead us in new ways as peacemakers.

Looking back on 2020, Disciples Peace Fellowship sees all the ways that God's dream of peace and justice is unfolding all around us. There were so many unexpected blessings from our 2020 DPF Peace Interns' experiences (a renewed focus the spiritual support of our Peace Interns, a deepening relationship with our denominational partners, and new ways of creating/capturing/sharing the Peace Interns' workshops) and we are working hard to "re-imagine" what our Peace Intern Program will look like in the future. The DPF Peace Intern Program has been in place since 1975, and we have never missed a single summer. Looking back on this past year, grateful for the ways that God guided us, we are evaluating the summer program to find ways that we can bring those unexpected blessings from this summer more intentionally and purposefully forward into our work for years to come.

Disciples Volunteering

Josh Baird, Director

Disciples Volunteering connects, supports, and equips Disciples serving in mission. This work is carried out through Sending Teams in Mission, Shaping Servant Leaders, and Supporting Local Missions. At the core of this work are faith values: learning, serving, and community. As DISCIPLES, we are students, learning through action and reflection, striving to deepen our faith by living it with others. In SERVING, we model ourselves after the one who came not to be served but to serve, giving and receiving in humility, and respecting the gifts of each one. Through COMMUNITY, we connect our faith and our lives with others, with deference for those with whom we serve, growing together in faith. Disciples Serving Community move from volunteer to servant to neighbor to friend as we get dirty for Jesus together.

People have called this time we are in "the Pause." At first, that resonated with me. When the severity of the looming crisis became clear, I temporarily shut down Disciples Volunteering's mission stations and placed upcoming programs on hold. I communicated my concern and intention with partners, seeking their counsel along the way. Together, we acted out of loving care for our servants and for those with whom we serve. As the crisis deepened, this holding pattern extended indefinitely. With seemingly daily revelations about the dangers of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 and its spread, it became clear that we will not, at some point in the future, simply hit "play" and resume activity where we left off. This is not a surprise: a foundational tenet of disaster recovery is that one does not "return to normal" after a disaster. The world changes in small and large ways; to move through recovery and gain a sense of wholeness requires reaching a "new normal," an adaptation to these changes.

What this means for Disciples Volunteering – indeed, for the whole church – remains an open question. Care for those who serve and those they serve with will guide Disciples Volunteering. Conversations point toward an eventual resumption of disaster response mission stations that look and operate differently, providing the most reasonable protections for all involved. More broadly, I anticipate a shift in emphasis to local mission engagement. Because of the heightened risks involved in travel, sharing meals and public spaces, and lodging away from home, congregations will be encouraged to identify ways to serve within or closer to their own community. Disciples Volunteering is collating updates via a single webpage: <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/covid-19-updates/>. Included on this page are announcements, volunteer guidance, and, soon, updated mission trip protocols.

The summer mission intern program was already in a state of transition. Having previously reached out to other Disciples ministries with young adult service programs, Disciples Volunteering was planning a gathering to collaborate on a revision, possibly restructure, of the program. That is now delayed. The current crisis has removed the possibility for placing interns in all but one, maybe two, locations. While some mission sites have closed for the summer, others are still assessing the impact on their program.

Disciples Volunteering is supporting responses in Puerto Rico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Missouri. Referrals are available to partners in Texas and California. An evolving ecumenical project, in collaboration with the United Church of Christ and the Church of the Brethren, was taking shape in Dayton, Ohio. Engaging through Church World Service and National VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), including my chairing of the National VOAD Long-term Recovery Group Committee, connects Disciples Volunteering and the Church with a broad spectrum of partners for mission. Among the benefits of these relationships, Disciples Volunteering and Week of Compassion, in partnership with the Pamlico County Disaster Recovery Coalition, wrote for and received a \$29,250 grant from Lowe's Home Improvement. These funds, made available through membership in National VOAD, will enable the purchase of materials for home repairs in Pamlico County, North Carolina.

Evangelism & Congregational Transformation & Merger Staff

Rev. Dr. R. Wayne Calhoun, Sr., Executive

Beginning my 18th year in the Office of Evangelism & Congregational Transformation and Merger Staff

October 1st of this year began my eighteenth year of service to DHM and the General Church as the Executive for Evangelism, Congregational Transformation, and Merger Staff of the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). I often remember so well the excitement and feeling I had seventeen years ago when I arrived

at DHM to begin a new season in my life and ministry to this community of faith I have been a part of for sixty-three years. I remember how excited I was to be able to have the opportunity to help this church rediscover one of the core values, which propelled the Stone-Campbell Movement onto the landscape of the American frontier as it was then in 1801 with Barton Warren Stone in Kentucky at Cane Ridge. The excitement Barton Stone created at Cane Ridge is the same excitement I felt in August of 2003 when DHM extended me the offer to be the evangelist of the denomination.

Updates from the Office of Evangelism and Congregational Transformation, Disciples Home Missions

In the fall of 2019, the Office of Evangelism and Congregational Transformation unveiled a “new process” for doing “evangelism” in local congregations in a 21st-century context. Helping Disciples congregations to “**Reclaim the Great Commission: A New Evangelism**” is the goal and mantra of this office for my remaining tenure in this position. As the world around us has transitioned from a 20th-century context to a 21st-century context, the church must also come into a 21st-century context. About three years ago, I began to reflect on my time in ministry and devoting time thinking critically about how Disciple congregations approach evangelism. In a “nutshell,” I would like to see congregations “**Reclaim the Great Commission.**” The time has come for Disciples of Christ congregations to recognize that Transformation and Evangelism are dependent on each other. In other words, “evangelism” will become a core value for Disciples congregations again. Jesus instructed his disciples in the latter part of Chapter 28 in the Gospel of Matthew, *Go! And make disciples! And baptize! And teach the world! About this Savior name Jesus who transforms lives! (NRSV)*

Report on the third initiative of the 2020 Vision, Congregational Transformation

In 1996 the Disciples embarked on a goal of transforming 1,000 existing congregations the end of 2020. This office was directed to lead the charge of congregational transformation, which is the third initiative of our 2020 Vision. Through the combined efforts of DHM, Hope Partnership, Regions and transformational consultants working with individual Disciples congregations we will have successfully reached our goal of 1,000 established congregations who are intentionally and actively working on being transforming congregations. At this juncture in our journey, we have over 900 congregations in transformation. The number listed above is based on combined numbers from all the partners listed in this report. Although the goal was 1,000 congregations in transformation by January 2021, the reality is all our congregations in the United States and Canada needs to be congregations in transformation. The Office of Evangelism and Congregational Transformation does offer and have in place a very effective congregational transformational process that it offers to congregations. DHM’s CT process has worked well for many of the congregations that have engaged it. The bottom line is, if Disciples congregations in the 21st century are going to be relevant in their mission and ministry context, they will need to be committed to a transformational process as they move into being transformational bodies in the world, which they now find themselves doing mission and ministry.

Hope for the Future

My hope and prayer moving forward for this ministry of the church charged with doing mission and ministry is that DHM will continue to anticipate the challenges and obstacles local congregations encountered face trying to figure out what God is calling them to do as it relates to doing mission and ministry in a 21st century context.

General Youth Council

Rev. Trayce L. Potter, Liaison

2020 has been a year of shifting focus and coming to terms with the ever-changing landscape of church and culture for members of the General Youth Council. For many years, this group has been accustomed to having at least one in person meeting, typically during the first quarter. With the coronavirus pandemic we were not able to meet at all which leaves the current council never having met the new members or being exposed to the wider events of the church.

In an effort to build relationships across the church, GYC members were planning to attend the 2020 Experience to learn cultural dynamics, meet potential members and experience the beauty of diversity that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has to offer. Again, because of the pandemic, those plans were also cancelled.

This left us looking forward to 2021 as GYC is integral in planning the youth components of the General Assembly. With the announcement that there would be no assembly next year, the council is having to pause to gain clarity over it's true purpose, structure and what barriers exist in living out it's mission.

We were able to witness some eye-opening experience that have compelled us to look outside ourselves for how we grow and adapt to be what youth across the church need. GYC is becoming more aware of societal and cultural issues that impact youth, even if it is not their own reality. They have upped their social media presence and are engaging with more individuals, and on deeper topics, than they have in the past. Youth members are looking at justice issues and figuring out what their priorities are and how to share their voice with the church.

We have begun to have listening sessions with key members of the Christian Church to better understand how we can improve and look forward to continuing these dialogues with wider and more diverse groups of people in the coming months and in to 2021. This will set us up to restructure in a way that is in line with the priorities of DHM and consistent with the pulse of young people. This will help us to advocate for youth across the church and welcome new voices which is consistent with God's dream and call for us all.

Green Chalice

Revs. Carol Devine and Scott Hardin-Nieri, Ministers

Green Chalice started 2020 with much excitement and a full calendar. We had received an Oreon Scott Grant. We started a formal partnership with Week of Compassion. The CCK and DHM boards were fully supportive. Everything changed with COVID-19, many events were canceled, the rest went virtual and all travel ceased. We have sought out and created new opportunities in this virtual world for which we are grateful. In 2021, we will continue to do the work to which God has called us. Thank you, DHM Board for your continued support.

Administrative Work Summary

- Monthly e-newsletter, *Green Chalice News* and Guest Writings (Book of Prayers)
- 187 Green Chalice Ministries (Congregations, Camps, Regional Offices)
 - 12 - *Certified Green Chalice Congregations*
- Phone calls, emails, and meetings every month.
- Website – updates every few months
- Social Media - Facebook, Twitter and Instagram - new posts
- Expanded GC written resources to include some in Spanish and Korean
- Submitted a Thriving Congregations Lilly Grant application to expand GC into underserved climate vulnerable congregations, it was denied

Partnerships

- *Week of Compassion* – on Disaster Preparedness
- *Creation Justice Ministries* – Virtual Annual Board Meeting, May 2020
- *Interfaith, Power and Light* – Green Chalice Congregation Beta Tested IPL Carbon Calculator
- Lexington Theologica Seminary Green Task Force (Annual Golf Scramble)
- Interfaith, Power and Light in Kentucky and North Carolina
- Blessed Tomorrow Leadership Circle
- Disciples Justice Ministries
- Creation Care Alliance of Western North Carolina for Eco Justice Camp, Clergy Retreat, and Clergy Advent Lectionary Workshop

Events

- *Wild Goose Festival* in Hot Springs, NC – CANCELED
- NC Regional Assembly – Workshops CANCELED
- Preaching at Dr. William Barber's Church - CANCELED
- Attended Interfaith Sustainability Summit February 4, 2020, Lexington, KY
- Climate Ambassador Training for female clergy- Feb. 7th Montreat, NC
- Creation Care Eco Justice Retreat, Feb. 8, Montreat, NC

- Training and Preaching, March 7-8, 2020 Monte Vista CC, Albuquerque, NM
- Preached Virtual Central CC Lexington, KY – Earth Day, FCC Puyallup, WA
- ELCA in Virtual Climate Training April 2020
- NC Clergy Training and Conversation May 26, 2020
- Disciples Peace Interns Training in Climate and Faith, Virtual, May 28, 2020
- Climate Ambassador Training – Virtual Webinar with Blessed Tomorrow June 2020
- Attended Poor People’s Campaign – Virtually July 2020
- Green Chalice hosted Eco-Justice Camp at *Christmount* Virtually, July 2020
- MI Regional Assembly, Keynote & Workshop, Virtual, August 2020
- Eco-America Climate Leadership Summit Virtual August 2020
- New Mexico Virtual Climate Summit September 2020
- TN Regional Assembly – Virtual Workshop October 9, 2020
- KY Regional Assembly – Virtual Workshop October 16, 2020
- Obra Hispana Virtual Workshop October 24, 2020
- Clergy Advent Lectionary Virtual Event October 29, 2020
- Interfaith Indiana Climate/Creation Care Virtual Panel November 11, 2020

Where do you see signs of God’s unfolding dream for this ministry?

Even with financial and pandemic obstacle, Green Chalice continues to grow with participation by more congregations, Obra Hispana, Regions and Ministries. Our dream in collaboration with God’s spirit is to accompany and support all Disciples’ Congregations and Ministries in creation care and climate crisis work. As we do the work of the General Assembly Resolution to become carbon neutral by 2030, we educate and provide pathways for congregations, regional and general ministries, and camps to find ways to lower their carbon footprints and support carbon offsets. This movement toward sustainability is not only an expression of God’s love but saves money and resources.

Assuming anything’s possible, where do you see possibilities for closer alignment to God’s dream?

Our dream includes stronger partnerships with Week of Compassion and Christmount to work closely with climate vulnerable congregations and ministries in disaster preparedness and in lowering their carbon footprint. We would love to offer grants and low or zero interest loans so that these congregations could make the necessary changes to be hubs of compassion and justice in their communities.

We want a diverse team of three full time ministers with support staff to do the work of saving God’s good earth and all creatures, including humans. GC congregations are leaders in their communities seeking right relationship with God, land, creation, and people. They are striving for carbon neutrality. They are utilizing land and buildings in ministries that are providing food, housing, shelter, energy, tree canopy, carbon sinks in ways that are equitable and just. GC congregations are models for their county, city and

DOC Region for how a church may grow in number and compassion in a time of division.

Immigration Legal Counsel
Natalie Teague

In taking the time to stop and reflect on the past six months, the changes and disruptions are overwhelming. 206 days and counting of lockdown (or some version of it). 210,000 unsuspecting people in the U.S. have passed – and counting. There are 28 days until an election that will inevitably redefine our realities even more, no matter which candidates are chosen on all levels of government.

My “veteran” immigration attorney colleagues report that the past six months have been both the most challenging procedurally and the very worst in terms of anti-immigrant sentiment – even over 9/11. I lived in New York before, during, and after 9/11, and I can attest that the most difficult aspect of today’s divisiveness is the lack of unity and the ever-increasing polarization of society because of it. We are all trying to change the (*many!*) things that we cannot accept, but it seems to be a Sisyphean exercise as the world crumbles. I take solace in the Disciples community and am so grateful to be among those who cherish social justice, racial equity, and truth.

Six months into this position, I have many more numbers to share with you regarding my actual work. But honestly, the numbers do not reflect the hardship that my clients and the immigrant community have faced. I have worked with families who have been separated by the COVID19 Presidential Proclamations – and will be through at least early 2021. I was asked by one client: “*Ms. Natalie, is the United States full?*” which crushed me.

Over the summer, there were monumental changes in immigration law and policy that came (and went) by arbitrary agency action, litigation, and/or tweet – sometimes on a daily basis. Changes in law historically move slowly because it is (or should be) a deliberative process to ensure consistency and accountability. Unfortunately, I have now witnessed how devastating and abusive it can be for those impacted by capricious changes in the law when such changes arbitrarily occur day to day, week to week. People, and systems, need time to adjust. Misinformation spreads like a virus when there is no predictability in the law. Good governance is steady and slow. Oh, how I wish to return to the days of monotonous frustration brought about by prolonged law making because at least then, our representatives were haphazardly upending, entire lives, families, and our world.

It now takes a year – and longer with a growing backlog – to petition for an immigrant pastor’s visa. In other words, a congregation would have to plan and commit to a new hire at least a year in advance, which is simply not practical in the new, unpredictable world of COVID19. As a result, no new immigrant pastor clients came into CC(DOC) in the past six months. (My “full representation” cases primarily consist of current pastors continuing their immigration journey through work or family.) While this cessation of

hiring may self-correct if and when things improve, this lack of “new blood” will have enormous repercussions for the Disciples community, its congregations, and its commitment to diversity and racial equity. I have no answers; I am simply reporting an alarming trend.

The “happy” stories in this six-month period include three case approvals, two of which had been pending for well over a year and required extensive advocacy and time against burdensome (and mind you, unnecessary) Requests For Evidence (i.e. “RFE”). Please see my addendum at the end of this piece for more information about RFE’s. Also, DACA was temporarily given a reprieve by the Supreme Court in June, but the Administration then properly rescinded it for new applicants in August. Finally, international students were almost kicked out of the U.S. less than two weeks prior to the start of classes – until ICE rescinded its (ridiculous, hasty, and unworkable) policy on how to account for virtual classes. (Maybe silver linings would be a more appropriate characterization?)

In writing this as fall descends, I share the anxiety of the upcoming election. Please know that I am “off” (and not working for DHM) on Tuesdays throughout October to volunteer as a legal monitor for absentee ballot processing here in Western North Carolina. By the time our paths next cross, we will have yet another entirely new world. May it be one where this virus is controlled and the sick are recovering. May it be one where there is greater compassion and reconciliation regarding our vast racial inequities and disparities. May it be one where our borders are welcoming and fewer human beings are locked up for seeking refuge. May it be one where our Earth is healing from too many fires, hurricanes, and effects of climate change. May we all find and live in peace and grace.

Reporting “By the Numbers:” May – October, 2020

Advice-only Consultations / “Brief service”: 30

Full Representation Cases / “Full service”: 15

Cases Approved: 3 – YES!

Presentations:

- 5/20 College of Regional Ministers – “Immigration 101” twenty minute [presentation](#)
- 5/30 “Contigo” guest appearance with Lori Tapia & Valeria Bejar on Facebook Live (en español)
- 6/11 Summer of Justice RIM, IRS, ILC [presentation](#) recorded
- 6/22 One hour legal overview of DACA SCOTUS decision live [presentation](#) on Zoom
- 7/17 International Student ICE Policy Change seminar scheduled and prepared, then cancelled (and memo to HELM and Disciples Seminaries sent) when ICE rescinded its policy eight days after announcement
- 8/17 Co-presentation with RIM re DACA rescission memo & TPS litigation updates

- 10/1 New Church Ministry – “Building a Bigger Table: Welcoming Immigrants” one hour [presentation](#) at Leadership Academy

Collaboration:

- Brainstorming and assistance in providing materials, recorded video presentation, etc. with Ministry Across the Generations & RIM re virtual mission trips in Summer 2020 for CC(DOC)-SW
- International student advising and information prepared and disseminated to Disciples institutions re ICE international student policy issues
- Full attendance at New Church Ministry 2020 Online Summit in August 2020
- Participated in Refugee and Asylum Advocacy Virtual Legislative Visits with RIM in July and August 2020
- Submitted article on international student fiasco to Week of Compassion for consideration in 2021 Offering
- Partial attendance at NBA SENT Seminar in September 2020
- Presentation and partial attendance at NCM Leadership Academy in October 2020
- Started reaching out, as time allows, for one-on-one virtual “coffee/tea” hours with regional ministers and other colleagues (as travel will resume who knows when?!?)

Disciples Events Attended:

- DACA prayer online vigil by RIM: weekly until decision on 6/18; presented after vigil on 6/22
- IWOBS (Immigrant led Weekly Online Bible Studies): biweekly for immigrant allies
- June 20 Poor People’s Campaign online
- Sheila Spencer Q&A Welcome Webinar on June 30
- DJAN monthly meetings when possible
- North Carolina Clergy Check-in after conference time with my Reg. Min. Bishop Valerie Melvin
- Regional Assemblies in: Indiana, Arizona, Illinois/Wisconsin, Kentucky, Nebraska, Pacific Southwest, Southwest (TX), Tennessee, and Virginia

Regulatory Comments Submitted on Proposed Rulemaking Changes:

- Asylum regulation: 21 pages submitted July 15 (within a 30-day notice and comment period)
- Department of Education funding restrictions under the CARES Act: 10 pages submitted July 17 (within a 30-day notice and comment period)

Select Immigration Legal Changes:

- USCIS closed mid-March to June 3 (closure extended twice), thus preexisting backlogs grew
- CDC rule used COVID19 to exclude arriving noncitizens by land
- USCIS reopened slowly starting 6/4; immigration courts remained closed until September (for non-detained cases)
- DACA SCOTUS decision – June 18

- Asylum regulations proposed (sweeping changes that will change the entire system) for notice and comment rulemaking – 6/15-7/15
- International Student Changes were implemented and then rescinded entirely within 8 days – July
- DACA partial rescission memo 7/28 – confirms no “new,” initial DACA applications
- More presidential proclamations that continued to restrict immigration and our borders
- [Continued increase \(by 60%\) in RFE’s](#) – including, most notably on cases previously approved in other postures (see also page 4)
- Limited releases from immigrant detention facilities despite COVID19 – prompting litigation
- Both the Acting Secretaries of DHS and USCIS were found by the Government Accountability Office to have been illegally appointed (the legal effect of this finding is still unknown) - August
- USCIS Policy Manual was updated to allow discretion for more denials in otherwise bona fide cases - August
- USCIS was set to furlough 70% of workforce on 8/1, then 8/31, then furlough cancelled by tweet on 8/25
- Public charge rule (enacted in February 2020) was stopped by federal injunction – August
- Proposed rule announced to collect extensive biometric data – including DNA and retinal scans from immigrants and/or their US Citizen sponsors – comment period closing 10/13
- Ramos case preliminary injunction lifted by the 9th Circuit for TPS (litigation ongoing) – 9/15
- Revelation of medical abuse and forced hysterectomies in immigrant detention centers: Sept
- USCIS Fee increases were to start 10/2; court injunction stopped increase on 9/30.
 - o For example, citizenship fees were to increase from \$725 to \$1,200, or 83%, with little to no fee waiver availability.
- Regulation to restrict H-1B nonimmigrant visas for specialty workers (which many Disciples pastors hold) was announced and then enjoined in federal court – 10/2
- So, so many nuanced proposed regulations have been announced to try to “re-legislate” by executive action prior to the election...

P.S. – About Requests for Evidence....

- Requests For Evidence occur after an affirmative immigration filing when the government thinks it needs more information to adjudicate the case. These requests used to be relatively uncommon; now, they happen in nearly every employment-based case – and especially in religious worker cases. In fact, there has been a [60% increase in RFE’s from 2017 to now](#).
- 2 RFE’s in 2 cases required 5.5 hours & 18 hours of work respectively:
 - o One case for Disciples pastor’s extension of current nonimmigrant status = 5.5 hours
 - o One case for Disciples pastor’s immigrant visa petition = 18 hours

- Note that most private immigration attorneys bill hourly to respond to RFE's (in addition to legal fees to advise, prepare, and file the initial case). An average market rate would be a minimum of \$250 per hour for a practitioner with my years of experience. Some (likely 1/3) of this time would be billed as "paralegal time," or typically ~\$50 per hour, but these are legally intensive inquiries and primarily require actual attorney time.
- Assuming these numbers, DHM saved CC(DOC) pastors and churches the following "hypothetical" legal fees:
 - o 5.5 hour RFE: 3.5 hours attorney time * \$250/hr = \$875
 - + 2 hours paralegal time * \$50/hr = \$100
 - Total = \$975
 - o 18 hour RFE: 12 hours attorney time * \$250/hr = \$3,000
 - + 6 hours paralegal time * \$50/hr = \$300
 - Total = \$3,300
 - o Essentially, in just two cases, DHM saved \$4,275 in legal fees by having ILC on staff (!!)

Want to know more?

- [Immigration Nation](#) was released by Netflix in August and is a difficult, but eye-opening and necessary, glimpse into our current immigration system from behind the scenes.
- Follow @DisciplesImmigration on Facebook & @DOCImmigration on Twitter

Leadership Initiative Team

Lonnie Graves, Director

At such an unusual time as this, ministry is being modified in many ways. Many challenges have continued, and some are new for the first time. Poverty, racism, isolation; and among these and many other concerns there is also church attendance decline, especially with the younger generations. This is only to scratch the surface of challenging problems today. When these are combined, the next step is daunting at best, especially when we are encouraged to remain quarantined. Let us offer these verses from Romans 8:37-39 as a place to begin:

But in all these things we are completely victorious through God who showed his love for us. Yes, I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor ruling spirits, nothing now, nothing in the future, no powers, nothing above us, nothing below us, nor anything else in the whole world will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

As a reminder, the goal of the Leadership Initiative Team (LIT) is to provide support, resources and speakers to compliment the training and development of Disciples leaders throughout the recognized organizations of the church: Regions, Districts, Fellowships and/or congregations among other bodies. The Leadership Initiative Team (LIT) is still available to provide support in many ways, from prayer, resources, training,

networking, conversations and sometimes just a listening ear, especially during these challenging times. We strive, as followers of Jesus Christ... as disciples, to live what Jesus has taught us. The examples have already been given to us.

At the 2019 General Assembly we learned that pastors, Regional Minister's, and congregants appreciated knowing the LIT was a resource group that may be helpful across many ministries, as needed, especially when so many are short-staffed. It also allows the opportunity to share the many facets of the work of DHM.

At such a time as this, it is also important to take the time to identify where we might see God active. We should then consider how LIT can come alongside to help and share; ways that a new perspective may be offered for existing ministries. It will be important to being opened to engaging dialogue around the table.

One of the largest supports that the LIT can offer is hope. If there is hope, faith can grow. With this, it will be hopeful to reclaim the Great Commission, its truth and critical importance of its instruction to Christ followers. It is important to know and share that this truth is as valid today as it was when Christ gave it to us.

Listening for God's voice and direction in 2020

As the team members gave voice to hopes for 2020, it was agreed that what the LIT team has done in the first year is good, but that moving forward we must remember that we are being shaped (prayerfully guided by the Holy Spirit) in this ministry and that we should be open to do more.

As we listened to the needs and hopes of pastors and elders; and recognizing there are many different needs for leadership, the LIT began conversations that would allow us to identify or design resources reflective of a few select versions, to make available a number of leadership choices. This would allow for the users to prayerfully identify a model that would work best for them.

The team felt, moving forward, that it will be important to be "fully engaged". In this way the Leadership Initiative Team can be a gift to the whole church. This is critically important when we have heard that so many congregations and regions are also hungry for "spiritual food". One of the LIT team members shared that within his General Church ministry, so many people are seeking to find what it means to be a true follower of Christ, and to know the meaning of the Great Commission. Because LIT can network with many manifestations of the church, we can work together as disciples of Christ to help address this need for spiritual food.

January was hopeful and active for the LIT and other ministries within DHM. A new leadership missional resource was being considered as part of a collaboration with other general ministries within the church but, because of unforeseen circumstances, it has not materialized. However, other important ministries have surfaced and are also vitally important.

At the LIT January meeting, Randy Kuss shared with the LIT that the young adults (Young Adult Commission) are at an in-between point and are looking to define the actual purpose of the commission. They want to do more than just being active at General Assembly, and would like to be more active in other ways.

Sheila Spencer also shared in reference to young adults that young adults from NAPAD and the National Convocation were making plans to be very active in the 2020 experience. Young adults that were initially active in the planning of the 2020 experience were advocating for intentional conversations that include all generations. It was also shared that the young adults on the commission, are looking at their next options. It was also noted that we must remember that the older generations can bring wisdom and history yet, also learn from the younger generations and visa versa. As you know, the 2020 event was cancelled, but the adult generational concerns are still at the forefront.

Also, at the beginning of the year the LIT was in the process of planning its first formal spring LIT retreat. This was to be a time to gather, pray and be in community with one another while addressing the generational and spiritual needs we have shared in this report; and to also consider the many other possibilities within the LIT ministry. Shortly, beginning in February, everything came to an abrupt halt. There were unexpected changes within DHM along with the mandate to shelter-in-place, carrying with it the dangers of Covid19 among other challenges.

The Leadership Initiative Team has continued to meet virtually. An immediate shift to the agenda items during these meetings were focused on ministry challenges during the Corona Virus, churches closing too quickly without a time for emotional closure for the congregants and pastors, pastors wildly ill-equipped for many facets of the virus. We also had to recognize the toll these new challenges were taking on team members as well. At our June meeting, the first elephant in the room that we had to address was the George Floyd killing along with conversation about death/dying, virtual funerals and chaplain challenges and more. The challenges of this year have been daunting at best and the answers blurred.

The dialogue, however, on new ways to do ministry continues. The Leadership Initiative Team is an entity within the church that has the ability to become the multifaceted compliment, guide, and coach available to help any group within the church to have success in their efforts to develop ministry and leaders and to overcome the challenges at hand. For a time, such as this, we have expanded our place in the virtual world. The LIT, prior to quarantine, has previously conducted online meetings and trainings, but in some cases, this was a precursor to in-person exchanges. It is now the new "normal" and not the exception.

With all these challenges there are still blessings. The Leadership Initiative Team has good news to report: As we continue to consider the primary concerns of many regions and churches and having heard from so many entities that there is a chasm of misunderstanding and miscommunication between adults in the church of all ages, the LIT submitted a proposal to the Orion E. Scott foundation. The Leadership Initiative Team was awarded a grant to foster conversations with the hopes of bridging the lost

lines of communication and to find ways to better recognize and utilize the God given gifts and talents of young adults.

This grant is written with the hopes to open the door for adults, young and old, to have intentional conversations that will allow the visions of young adults and the wisdom of older adults to blend in ministry according to the scriptures. The Leadership Initiative Team is now unpacking plans to begin this process. It is our hope to collect valuable information through Survey Monkey, which will ask questions about spiritual and leadership needs in the church. In addition, we will establish focus groups to begin the conversations to consider how we live as followers of Christ considering all generations. We are prayerfully seeking the direction of the Holy Spirit on this leg of the LIT ministry journey.

We, the Leadership Initiative Team are challenging ourselves to move away from the “many meetings with few measurable outcomes” (conference model); and to look for ways to move forward in a positive, measurable, and sustainable way.

One of our first steps was to assign a few volunteers from our team to be intentional in seeking to have the first talks that have begun the process of deeper and more meaningful conversations with young and older adults. We offer a link to share a recording of that virtual time together as an option for deeper understanding:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9yp7s1laUc&feature=youtu.be>

We feel it is important to find our direction in the scriptures, asking for wisdom and recognizing that the Holy Spirit, our Helper and Comforter who is always present. We are considering strongly Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17:

“God says: In the last days I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will have special dreams.” ERV

As ministry unfolds in a new way, the message is the same. As followers of Christ – As Disciples we are still called in many ways.

In our LIT meetings the team members have been honest, affirming and encouraging. We all agree that it is time to be intentional about acknowledging and seeking the voices and gifts of young adults that God has called to ministry and service in the church. It is important that their contributions are not received as “token”, but as stakeholders as disciple followers of Jesus Christ. In this it is possible that we may see lives lived out as part of Gods plan.

So, what are the next steps for the LIT? These are suggestions from our team members to move forward as a ministry team:

- Recognize that it is important to ask for God’s wisdom and direction.
- Acknowledge the Holy Spirit
- Pray without ceasing

- Engage in Collaboration
- Access the community and ask what their needs are while being intentional about listening to truly “hear”
- Use our privilege for a greater good
- Conduct an audit of ministers and pastors to know what the pressing needs are
- Capitalize on relationships that already exist
- Look at tangible connections with existing ministries
- Be intentional about getting important information out to communities that can benefit from that resource.
- During this Covid19 crisis be aware of the available existing resources that support worship, parents, and clergy response. When possible share these options in communities that will benefit from this information.
- People are looking to access podcast for help and information. This would be a good resource for the voices of mission co-workers and other young ministers
- Encourage the Young Adult Commission to continue to create their podcast and be supportive in helping to get the word out.

It is important to know how essential it is to have young adults at the table, not as a token, but as active participants and as a collaborating ministering decision maker. The truth is that the young adults have been given gifts by God as well and some are called to also be stake holders in ministry as followers of Jesus Christ. By the same token, older adults are to live-out their God-given gifts, called to bring a nurturing attitude, God-given wisdom, and history.

Knowing that the church as we knew it historically, will not be the same, it will be important to hear ideas, new voices, and other ways we can work together to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ as we do ministry. We can see this as a time of opportunity, focusing on this current phase as a critical time to consider how to engage, and think about the church of the future. The gospel is the same, and our own witness to this are more important than ever.

Below, as part of this report, we are offering a couple of (optional) videos to expand your perspective of the new communication methods of young adults. Addressing your challenge for this report, “assuming anything possible”, In the above video we referred to NBCLx. The couple of video links below are an example of the way younger generations communicate today (just FYI). This may be something that we can share and debrief with other young adults in the church and receive their response regarding using such a platform as a possible method and tool to share the gospel and for other ministries. This is only an example. The input for ministry through this method would have to come from young adults. Wisdom, theology, and disciple’s history might come from the older generations. Once again, this is only one example of a possible collaboration. Please visit the links follow:

<https://techcrunch.com/2019/09/24/nbcu-launches-ix-a-local-news-network-aimed-at-younger-cord-cutters/>

<https://www.nexttv.com/news/nbcuniversal-owned-stations-launch-ix-network>

There are so many young adults that are already making contributions to the ministries of the church. There are young adults in service through Overseas Ministries, young adults in HELM, those serving in the Young Adult Commission and in many other ministries throughout the church. The options to share the callings and work of these young adults is endless. There are many stories to share.

This report only scratches the surface of ways the LIT can be involved in supporting those who are working to spread the good news of the love of God through Jesus Christ. There is still much to do as we prayerfully live into this call to serve on this team.

With prayer and listening for God's direction, the LIT continues to be a work in progress. Though the team has made strides forward, we are reminded of the importance of listening... listening, not only for the entities that are requesting LIT as a resource but more importantly is to listen for God's Spirit and direction. Let us all be in prayer... ask for God's guidance for the work of the Leadership Initiative Team, through the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit guides, we want to be "fully engaged". Praise God!

Ministries Across Generations

Rev. Dr. Olivia Bryan Updegrave, Director

Usually when I give this report, I do not focus on numbers. Yet, with the financial realities of 2020, I want to make sure the board is aware of the deep passion that the Ministries Across Generations primary team for their calls and preparedness for "such a time as this."

Please note, Sheila Spencer has been a part of this team, but she was called to transition during this time. Other primary team members (those paid) include Randy Kuss, Lisa Engelken, and Kate Epperly. We also welcomed Wilma Shuffitt as our wonderful Ministry Associate! I, Olivia Bryan Updegrave, seek to support their work in addition to my own. While each of the team members will give their reports separately, I think it is beneficial to see it all written out together.

During 2020, MAG was one of the first ministries **ready and able** to respond to the needs of family faith and intergenerational realities in a **virtual world**. The website docfamiliesandchildren.org became a quick resource for those seeking virtual tools and faith at home tools.

- **Basic Responsibilities for MAG team:**
 - MAG Newsletters, Website(s), Facebook Pages (6), Communication Tools (Advocate, Constant Contact, Disciples Exchange, Disciples News), LIT meetings, DHM Meetings, CW&W trainings, Justice Meetings, YAC, GYC, DYMN, and MAG Meetings
 - Gathering with regions and other leaders to help provide resources, etc. *(Due to being in a virtual space all of us have had more contact with our regions and other ministries.)*
These include: GYC, YAC, regional assemblies, youth experiences, New Church Summit, North Carolina, Northern California, Camps, Southwest

Region, West Virginia, Georgia, Oklahoma, DOctalks, Ecumencial: Samuel Proctor Dewitt (Kate)... and more!

- Randy's report highlights the GYC and the YAC revisioning work. It includes conversations with NBA and LIT. They also put out statements in solidarity with those speaking out against racism. YAC was the inspiration for Light a Candle with a Camper.
 - The weekly zoom meetings have moved into **monthly check-ins** with guest speakers. They have included:
 - Heather Santi-Brown (Virtual Refugee and Immigration Mission Trip for all Ages),
 - Jennifer McLaughlin and Courtney Wooten (CommUNITY VBS writers),
 - Liz Perraud (Director of GenON),
 - Linda Staats (Creator of the Generosity Project) and Bruce Barkhauer,
 - Cory Siebel (author of *Intergenerative Faith*) ... and more.
 - Monthly Outdoor Ministry Association check-ins with Randy. Randy continues to engage with experts to help our camp leaders make the most faithful choices.
- **Disciples Family Faith at Home Boxes: 20 Stories Total**
 - **Lent Boxes:** Intentional families from the denomination were chosen to represent various regions and backgrounds. These boxes contain a story for each week of Lent along with figure and manipulatives to guide families in ways to worship at home.
 - **Summer/Fall Parable Boxes:** Envelopes with stories, felt and cut outs for parables.
 - **Advent Boxes:** Seven stories of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany with felt, manipulatives and stories to engage with at home.
 - **Children Worship & Wonder**
 - Discussions with higher education institutions about engaging in higher learning.
 - First virtual workshop
 - Weekly videos of all the stories from our trainers
https://youtube.com/channel/UCL10TN4Jh_3Pa0wEGXTeFSq
 - **COVID Specific Responses**
 - Website updates with responses, insights, and helpful tools. (Camp updates, at home options with kids and youth, and **virtual safety guidelines** in conversation with Insurance Board)
 - Weekly Zoom Meetings: Youth/YA/MAG leaders, Outdoor Ministries, CW&W Virtual Family Worship, and other quick responses as people started to put pieces together.
 - Graduate grieving resources: NBA SoulCare collaboration with General Youth Council.

- #HolySpiritHolyWeek virtual challenge for images, videos, and insights to celebrate Holy Week.
- Updated reconciliation resources with children, youth, etc.
- **Outdoor Ministry** (Monthly Check-in Meetings)
 - Ecumenical connections to create virtual summer platforms for online VBS, Camps, etc.
 - Direct conversation with Lee Yates and the virtual movement of the summer camp curricula from Chalice Press, Inside Out “This is Our Prayer.”
 - Randy’s Connections with ecumenical partnerships (and events).
 - Light a Candle with a Camper (for Children’s Sabbath) Devotions
- **Justice Responses**
 - Kate’s Work: DHM PRAR Team: Co-Convener Pro-Reconciling/Anti-Racism Team
 - Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence
 - Interfaith Disability Advocacy Collaborative
 - NBA’s “W.H.O.L.E. Disciples - A movement for Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence eradication- Woke, Healed, Organic, Liberated and Educated” seeking to implement GA-1928
 - Disciples Justice Ministries Team
 - Christmas Mission Project for asylum seekers
 - Virtual 7K Challenge: (\$1500 for Reconciliation Ministries)
 - Talking to Kids About the Poor People’s Campaign: <https://www.poorpeoplescampaignkids.org/>

Kate, Randy, and Lisa are all contracted to work 5 hours a week (20 hours a month). I (Olivia) am part-time in this position (20 hours a week). Kate and Lisa both take care of their grandchildren. Lisa and Randy both directly serve with other churches, and Kate is very involved in activism in her area. I am home schooling my children and I also serve as a part-time pastor. Like most ministers, we work WAY more than the \$. Our passion, however, for the work of the church with those who often get ignored is a powerful witness. We work ecumenically, denominationally to create amazing ways for local, regional, and general levels of ministries to respond faithfully to this hurting world. I share these situations and numbers because I celebrate this team - especially in 2020! - as God’s precious people and worthy of your support!

Justice and Advocacy for Families and Children
Rev. Kate Epperly, Minister

1. My call and the call of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to advocate for justice and compassion for the children and families of our nation remains loud and clear. Our nation’s care for children and families is far from “God’s dream” and this dream seems to get farther away each day. I have found it most

effective to network with ecumenical agencies to “bring the Word” of child and family advocacy to Disciples in several limited areas to which the Spirit and Ron Degges (initially) called me. A contract ministry of 5 hours a week needs to be primarily a networking ministry, seeking to bring to those who care about “Disciples Justice for Children” information about advocacy initiatives being launched by other ministries – both within and beyond Disciples.

Assuming “anything is possible” this ministry deserves funding for more than five paid hour/week and, in particular, specific assignment of a tech savvy Ministry Assistant to help to forward greater denomination-wide communication of this important ministry’s mission and opportunities. The assignment of Wilma Shuffitt to the MAG team as well as regular meetings and communications of the Disciples Justice Ministries Team has helped much in this regard.

2. My own regular communications efforts include the following:
 - a new DHM “Disciples Justice for Children” webpage (www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/disciples-justice-for-children/) (Thanks you Wilma Shuffitt!)
 - a “Disciples Justice for Children” FB page (from which I share to 4 or 5 additional Disciples FB groups),
 - articles written in *The Advocate* and also on the MAG Team website (www.docfamiliesandchildren.org).
 - When I got my DHM page, I let my www.disciplesjusticeforchildren.org blog go... which I have now decided was a mistake. I may try to recapture the domain name in the new year and start it up again. I also Tweet for DHM occasionally under my own name.
 - This fall, in partnership with Olivia Updegrave, I created new family-centered resource for reflecting and acting on the “Jubilee Justice Platform” of the Poor People’s Campaign. Thanks to Olivia Updegrave it was transformed into a website (with a downloadable PDF) which can be found at. (www.poorpeoplescampaignkids.org/) and soon, will be added to on the Poor People’s Campaign website itself under the “LEARN” tab.

3. In addition to supporting ongoing Ministries Across Generations general initiatives, I represent us at monthly meetings of:
 - Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence (<http://faiths-united.org>)
 - Interfaith Disability Advocacy Collaborative (<https://www.aapd.com/idac>)
 - NBA’s “W.H.O.L.E. Disciples - A movement for Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence eradication- Woke, Healed, Organic, Liberated and Educated” seeking to implement GA-1925
 - Poor People’s Campaign Prophetic Council
 - Disciples Justice Ministries Team

4. Additional Activities:

DHM PRAR Team: I continue to serve with Brenda Tyler as Co-Convener of DHM's Pro-Reconciling/Anti-Racism Team. I will be Co-Convening with Warren Lynn in the new year. We had modest success using a three month long modified "Racial Equity Challenge" awareness raising program which, under my program coordination, was launched on the Basecamp platform. A number of DHM staff and mission associates remarked that they appreciated reading/watching the resources provided, but that they had little emotional strength to share in online conversations about the matter, due in some measure to the social and emotional duress not only of COVID-19 but the activities around the injustices of police gun violence against so many Black persons and the particularly high BIPOC toll taken by the pandemic.

Our August planning retreat was cancelled due to a calendar conflict, however, at our regular Zoom meeting this October we affirmed our intention to carry out the basic 6-year rubric as established, with the possible addition of some newer publications for reading and discussing. We have been in communication with several potential leaders for our all staff and Board Anti-Racism and members have suggested moving away from the more "academic" framework to learn from local Black Lives Matter activists instead.

Finally, I am happy to report that because it was virtual and free this year, I was able to finally attend the Children's Defense Fund's Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute! That said, my primary contact at Children's Defense Fund remains Rev. Shannon Daly-Harris (founder of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute) who supports my "dream" of helping to create a CDF based new ecumenical child advocacy network. I am very grateful to be able to serve in this ministry as the culmination of my lifetime of Disciples shaped faith formation and ministry to my Savior Jesus.

Refugee & Immigration Ministries

Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director

In recent months, refugee admissions have gone to historic lows, asylum opportunities have been substantially constrained, family separation has re-surfaced, immigrant detention and deportation have grown, and employment challenges—even for essential workers--have continued to grow during COVID. In the midst, Disciples RIM continues to offer education, spiritual resources, and engagement opportunities for congregations, and offers hope for refugee and immigrant children, families, and communities. In all efforts, RIM seeks to follow Isaiah's call, and invites Disciples to *"do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, and plead the cause"* for refugee and immigrant populations, such as:

Living Isaiah's Call by: Learning to Do Good for Refugees

With 26 million refugees—more than ever--in the world, U.S. leadership has proposed a lowest ever 15,000 refugees; down from an average of 95,000 refugees per year since

the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980--now 40 years ago! In 2018, the U.S. resettlement goal number was reduced to 50,000, in 2019 to 30,000 (with 90% less Muslim refugees and many less persecuted Christian refugees arriving), and in 2020 to only 18,000. Actual resettlements in 2020 were only 11,814 refugees. With no goal signed yet weeks into 2021, resettlement has ground to a halt. In the midst of this, RIM has celebrated Disciples' vibrant work with refugees, and encouraged Disciples to support refugees by:

- Holding World Refugee Day (June 20) & Refugee Welcome Sunday (June 21) events; helping churches Learn more here about refugee realities, & providing a 2020 Disciples Refugee Welcome Sunday planning toolkit, & 2020 "World Refugee Day Toolkit." RIM also prepped our GMP to speak on Disciples & refugees, on a Concordia Leadership Refugee Panel, June 19.
- Recruiting 11 Disciples leaders from 5 key states of NC, IA, UT, TX, CO, & OH to lead in the Nat'l Virtual Refugee Advocacy Days, Sept. 1-3; clergy, and a Regional Minister and lawyer.
- Researching, preparing, and posting Disciples stories and images as part of a #40for40 campaign, with 40 posts including: "Story Mondays & Fridays" about Disciples work with refugees; "Action Tuesdays" with steps to support and engage with refugees; "Worship Wednesdays"-Prayers, Litanies, Songs, & Testimonies about and from refugees; & "Tribute Thursdays" about refugee essential workers during COVID-19.
- Participating in this Presidential Determination numbers faith press release and this press release, encouraging Disciples to consider signing onto this pledge in support of refugees & asylum seekers, and Educating Disciples about ways to support restoration of U.S. Refugee Resettlement, through alerts such as: <https://conta.cc/3jJ9FrQ> & <https://conta.cc/2N9ivkG>.

Living Isaiah's Call by: Seeking Justice for DACA & TPS Recipients

Recent months have deeply impacted the 700,000+ DACA & 300,000 TPS (Temporary Protected Status) recipients. DACA leaders celebrated the June SCOTUS decision halting DACA's end, then mourned a July DHS memo vowing to stop new applications, limiting protections to only 1 year (not 2) & again seeking to end the program. TPS holders from El Salvador, Nicaragua, Nepal, Haiti, Sudan, & Honduras, whose status was ended by the administration, await key court decisions. A Sept. court ruling cleared the way to end TPS; so DHS could deport TPS holders from Sudan, Nicaragua, & Haiti as early as 3/21, & from El Salvador by 11/21. Ends of TPS from Honduras & Nepal could be triggered; leading to family separations & mass deportations from their 275,000 U.S. born children. RIM has supported DACA and TPS communities by:

- Engaging faith groups to support DACA recipients & seek permanent solutions. RIM's Director & Immigration Response Specialist (Valeria Bejar) convened 60-115 persons weekly for months before the SCOTUS decision to pray, hear testimonies, get policy updates, & act.
- Offering 3rd Monday prayers, 1 pm re: both DACA & TPS updates, RSVP here, and RIM WRAP alerts: <https://conta.cc/35ShI7P>, <https://conta.cc/311SJqN>, & <https://conta.cc/2NklcQB>.

- Activating US church members to Ring #DACABells4Justice after the SCOTUS decision for 7 minutes (a minute per 100,000 DACA recipients), and to share images on social media.
- Encouraging congregations to continue to support permanent protections for DACA and TPS such as <http://bit.ly/Faith4DACApetition>, and to share mental health resources such as [here](#).
- Educating Disciples chaplains, together with our Disciples IRS, from 5 Disciples HELM institutions; training/linking them with resources from the [President's Alliance on Immigration](#) and [TheDream.us](#) to support their DACA & other undocumented individuals on campus.
- Informing Disciples Liberians, such as at Whosoever Wills Christian Church in Beltsville, Md., to apply for [Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness](#) program until December 20, 2020.

Living Isaiah's Call by: Rescuing the Oppressed Detained/At Risk for Deportation

RIM has engaged in racial reckoning with black led immigrant rights organizations & faith partners; due to often lengthier detentions in poorer conditions and frequent deportations faced by [black immigrants](#). Deportations of [Southeast Asians](#) who entered as refugees, & of legal immigrants, have also multiplied. Crowded detention centers have bred COVID; with over 20 percent of detainees testing positive. Frequent transfers of immigrants between centers and over 450 deportation flights in 2020 have further spread COVID internationally. [Deportations to African nations](#) have multiplied during the pandemic, notably to the Congo, Cameroon, Liberia, Nigeria and elsewhere. RIM has assisted migrants facing oppressive detention and deportation conditions by:

- Inviting all to join "[Dismantling Racism in the Fight for Family Immigration](#)," & helping plan and co-sponsor "[Black Africans Confront the U.S. Asylum System](#)". Shared race and immigration resources through RIM WRAP alerts: <https://conta.cc/2VRksHk>, & <https://conta.cc/3cyrUy6>.
- Urging Disciples urge release of non-violent immigrants from detention due to public health concerns, and a halt to deportations during COVID. See statements such as from [evangelicals](#), refugee groups like [IRC](#), and [CWS joining](#) to support immigrant workers.
- Serving 6 years of service on the Board of SEARAC (Southeast Asian Resource Action Center); working on detentions and deportation defense affecting AAPIA communities.
- Responding to [DACA](#) and [TPS](#) decisions, & linking with groups such as [National TPS Alliance](#).
- Conducting weekly faith vigils confronting racism in Washington, D.C. in June, & participating in a CC Capital Area Region book study of How to Be an Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi.
- Helping expose poor detention conditions and atrocities such as the unwanted gynecological surgeries at Irwin Detention Center. See "[Exposing Unwanted Surgeries & Poor Detention Conditions/Irwin](#)" RIM also connects with Georgia's regional minister regarding these cases.
- Encouraging Disciples faith partners to support deportation defense cases for Pastor Steven (RIM WRAP: <https://conta.cc/3jO3Byo>), Kenneth as he awaits

appeal (at left below), & Binsar Siahaan—taken from church grounds in Md., in opposition to ICE’s own “sensitive locations” memo (RIM WRAP: <https://conta.cc/30nVPnV>.) Helping lead in actions in front of the national ICE and DHS offices, as well as at the Baltimore ICE office, in support of freeing Binsar.

- Developing World Communion and immigration themed “Holy Welcome Weekend” resources.
- Chairing the “DC Congregational Cluster” of churches engaged in local immigration organizing work through the Congregation Action Network of the national Faith in Action organization.

Living Isaiah’s Call by: Pleading For At Risk Immigrants/Asylees & Farmworkers

During COVID-19, the U.S. has sped up deportations of more than 900 of the most vulnerable migrant children back to dangerous home country conditions, and with real risks during COVID. Reported attempts of child migrants are at odds with due process and protection standards, & with ICE’s own modified enforcement guidelines during the pandemic. Family detention has also re-surfaced in U.S. family detention centers in Dilley and Karnes City, Texas, and in Berks County, PA. Populations in the centers now include significant numbers of Haitians, other Caribbean’s, Africans, & Central Americans. Judge Gee, overseeing Flores protections, has repeatedly for their release, saying the “centers are ‘on fire’.” ICE has refused to release them; pushing parents sign to separate.

Additionally, relatives of Disciples Montagnard refugees in Charlotte and High Point, N.C. continue to experience long-term persecution due to their faith in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. RIM is again helping them fight against religious persecution for their relatives. And, immigrant and refugee farmworkers and meatpackers, and companies who rely on them as employees, are at great risk of COVID. Risks for health and fires affecting farmworkers likewise impact the food supply for us all. RIM has helped faith communities plead for at risk immigrants, asylees, and farmworkers by:

- Partnering with WOC in a \$500 grant to Tapestry Church in CA., for funeral expenses to a Honduran mom whose son was beaten by gangs so hard that a brain tumor grew & killed him.
- Educating Disciples about dangers immigrant children are facing due to changing immigrant and asylee policies. See RIM’s May 21st alert at: <https://conta.cc/2XggZSv>.
- Continuing to serve for the CC(DOC) on the board & as VP & Fundraising Chair for the National Farm Worker Ministry; founded by Disciples & four other denominations.
- Creating Pentecost resources focused on farmworkers & meatpacking workers here, and inviting Disciples to actions in this letter from UFCW, this letter, and to SIGN this letter.
- Lifting up and connecting Disciples with concerns of our key farmworker led partners—and their support campaigns--throughout the U.S. See our key partners here.
- Educating Disciples on “Asylum and Detentions Under COVID.” See here.

- Supporting Montagnard goals to advocate to stop religious persecution in their homeland.
- Leading actions, together with other faith partners, against family detention in front of the national ICE office in Washington twice, on July 17 and 27. See [here](#) and [here](#).
- Inviting and helping lead ten Disciples leaders to participate in national Virtual Advocacy Days, and led the Florida team, July 14-16. See [here](#).
- Continuing to urge the Senate to include excluded immigrants, and DACA/TPS recipients in future COVID relief packages. See [here](#). And, building [direct partnerships](#) with Berks, PA. [Interfaith Witness](#), to stop family detention, and helping Disciples leader in AZ to engage others. Developed faith resources [here](#) for World Communion Sunday, re: child detention.
- Involving churches with CWS's three new asylum project locations in Houston, TX; Jersey City, NJ; and Miami, FL. The Houston project is supported by Brite's immigration project.
- Developing [Disciples Justice Toolkit](#) and [shorter](#) and [longer](#) Disciples advocacy videos with partners, and recorded a RIM ["Summer of Justice" video](#), and [Virtual VBS resources](#).
- Consistently supervising Valeria Bejar, Disciples Immigration Response Specialist.
- Keynoting at Disciples Women of the Upper Mid-West Region, giving Call to Offering for IN Regional Assembly, & speaking to DC City Council for COVID support for excluded workers.

Yakama Christian Mission

David B Bell, Minister for Indigenous Justice

Yakama Christian Mission's three priorities are:

- Build denomination wide congregational support for indigenous justice (GA-1722 Resolved #6).
- Work denominationally to create a permanent Indigenous position (Resolved #3).
- Develop and provide educational resources and opportunities to learn and understand the impact of the Doctrine of Discovery in all manifestations of the Church (Resolved #2 & 5).

This is done while attempting to have a direct presence on the Yakama Reservation

Reservation

COVID: Indigenous households making less than \$45,000 per year, on reservations throughout the US, have been of the hardest hit peoples due to the pandemic. This holds true on the Yakama Reservation. Families who have had the virus spread through the entire family is not uncommon—along with virus related deaths.

Farmworker families have felt similar numbers of sickness and death due to COVID. More so, the emotional and spiritual toll on these families is much greater than other reservation populations. Sickness (and death) mean families expose themselves

(*immigrant/migrant status*) to systemically racist institutions to acquire needed services, which may lead to imprisonment and deportation.

Since March 1, 2020, working with people concerning issues related to COVID have been the base of YCM work on the reservation.

Off Reservation / United States and Canada

COVID: Analogous to reservation work, YCM as it pertains off the reservation has been affected by the pandemic. Most all work is online. And in one way or another has some tie to COVID.

Winter Talk (GA-1722: Resolved #6):

The national Winter Talk made it in just under the COVID line, February 10-12, with Jon Ghahate of the Pueblo Cultural Center (Albuquerque, NM).

Regional Winter Talk(s): Two regional Talks are developing. One in New Mexico (January 2021) which is ecumenical and one in Kansas (Fall 2021) which is DOC denominational.

Native American Boarding School Conference:

The second Annual Boarding School Healing Conference was held in Tulalip, WA in November 2019. Alongside with boarding school survivors, conversation was had concerning Disciples of Christ (DOC) racist and genocidal impact on Yakama people and how that relationship impacts Indigenous people in the United States and Canada. This impact was also considered through the settler-colonist relationship of the DOC and the United Methodist Church on the Yakama Reservation and how that relationship has allowed both denominations to hold Indigenous peoples and their history as invisible.

Disciples Home Missions (GA-1722: Resolved #3):

Moving toward Indigenous autonomy within the institutional structure of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—Disciples Home Missions (DHM) specifically—has been problematic during the last year. Part is attributed to COVID and the pandemic's impact on the institutional structure. Part is attributed to the change of DHM's president. Part is attributed to DHM's historic institutional structure which has generationally minimized Indigenous justice and indigenous voice.

During Ronald Degges tenure as President, he worked alongside YCM's Board President, Larry Crist, to move YCM toward becoming *the* Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) *Indigenous justice* organization. This conversation led to YCM moving its identity into DHM structure. During the last year of Degges' tenure, conversation imagined YCM, a team from the DHM Board, and Disciple's grassroots Indigenous organization *Landscape Mending* working together to develop an *Indigenous justice* organization whose identity might come from the merging of Landscape Mending and Yakama Christian Mission. These conversations continued during Sotello Long's tenure.

The core of this merging was to create a DOC presence whose primary interest would: hold Indigenous justice in Canada and the United States as a priority, become wholly autonomous from DHM, and maintain and manage YCM historical and current funds(ing).

Since the Degges/Sotello transition in 2017, DHM has yet to assign a Board team/group to enter into this conversation. Recognizing change is hard in historically racist structures I want to use this opportunity to invite DHM to convene a Board team to work with the Center for Indigenous Ministries (DOC) (formally “Landscape Mending) and YCM’s Minister for Indigenous Justice to walk toward the vision of having a recognized Indigenous presence in the DOC—similar to that of NAPAD, National Convocation, and OPRA Hispana.

COVID has defined how and when Indigenous justice work occurs within the Church during much of this last year. However, COVID need not inhibit our work in the coming year and we can become the people who enhance the wellbeing of relationship between Indigenous people of Canada and the United States, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Disciples Home Missions.

Youth & Young Adult Consulting Services

Rev. Randy Kuss, Coordinator

- **General Youth Council** – I partner with Trayce Potter to provide support and guidance for the work of the General Youth Council. Work with the GYC in 2020 with the pandemic challenges has pushed the group toward re-thinking of the role and work of GYC. Specifics are well covered in the report submitted by Trayce Potter. Beyond the frustrations of the pandemic, it is an energizing time as we look toward 2021 and new ways of being for GYC and how GYC might be a voice for youth in and to the wider Church.
- **Young Adult Commission** – I provide continuing support and guidance to the Young Adult Commission. As with the GYC, plans for YAC to meet in 2020 were pandemic-canceled, as well as plans to attend 2020 Experience: It’s Real in July at TCU. The Young Adult Commission is working on new ways to engage a wider group of young adults and the Church through development of a regular podcast to address a range of issues of concern to young adults. The current timeline is to go public early 2021. YAC will also be in dialogue with DHM’s Leadership Initiative Team and with NBA’s XPLOR program on ways we might collaborate on ministry together.
- **Outdoor Ministries** – As the pandemic shutdowns began, I initiated bi-weekly Zoom gatherings of Disciples outdoor ministries leaders to enable us to resource each other as strategies and plans were made for the pandemic Summer of 2020. While a number of our programs made the determination to close last summer, this regular virtual connection along with resources from ecumenical outdoor ministries contacts enabled many of our camps to offer virtual camp opportunities and serve children, youth, and adults across the denomination despite the

challenges. Outdoor Ministries Zoom gatherings continue on a monthly basis assisting leaders in their work on plans for Summer 2021, whether on-site, virtual, or some hybrid offering of events.

- **Ministry Across Generations** – I continued work with the Ministry Across Generations team. Beginning in March MAG provided regular Zoom opportunities with leaders working with children, youth, and young adults as everyone scrambled to figure out how to do these ministries in virtual formats. The Zoom gatherings provided opportunity for leaders to share questions and solutions, designs and resources in ways not available before. See the MAG report for full details on this shared work.
- **DYMN** – The pandemic forced cancellation of our Disciples Youth Ministry Network plans for the 2020 DYMN Retreat last Spring. There are tentative plans for a retreat April 2021, pending the state of the pandemic. The DYMN Team is working on a series of webinars on topics and issues in youth ministry to provide continuing education, training, and networking opportunities for Disciples youth leaders.
- **Disciples Peace Fellowship** – As I have for many years, I provided a portion of the training for this year's DPF Interns with a focus on spiritual practices and self-care as they shifted plans with the pandemic and prepared to offer an array of virtual presentations and workshops available online for summer camps and other events and groups.
- **Leadership Initiative Team** – Serving on DHM's Leadership Initiative Team as the past few months of 2020 the LIT focus has been on how DHM can listen and respond as to expressed needs of young adults. Members of the Young Adult Commission will be in dialogue with LIT to offer their guidance to the work.
- **Ministry Associate** – I would be remiss not to also name with gratitude the excellent work of Ministry Associate Kelly Harris keeping communications clear, work organized, and more, all the pieces without which the mission grinds to a halt.
- **God's Unfolding Dream** for this ministry is visible in the many varied ways leaders on GYC and YAC, with Outdoor Ministries and DPF and LIT, on the MAG and DYMN teams listen to needs, find resources, and design creative new ways to faithfully respond and minister in this most challenging pandemic season. As always, God finds a way for us to reach for newness and life in the midst. May we continue to walk open to where God will lead us.