

GB-21-1159

**CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) IN ALABAMA-NORTHWEST
FLORIDA**

Contact

Christian Church
in Alabama-Northwest Florida
861 Highway 52
Helena, AL 35080
(205) 425-5245, FAX (205) 425-5246
E-mail: alnwfl@aol.com
Web site: www.alnwfdisciples.org

Leadership

John P Mobley, Regional Minister
Dale C Braxton, Associate Regional Min
Nisha Warbington, Youth Ministries Staff

General Board Report

The following is provided for information to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Staff: Regional Minister - John Mobley (male)
 Associate Regional Minister - Dale Braxton (male, African American)
 Youth Ministries Staff Person - Nisha Warbington (female)
 Administrative Assistant/Office Manager - Susan Henderson (female)

Number of Congregations: 56 (including two congregations-in-information)

Total members: 5,564 (per 2020 Year Book and Directory)

States included in Region: - the entire State of Alabama, the panhandle of Florida, and Meridian, Mississippi

The basic work of the Region has not changed; however, with the COVID-19 has come many adaptations to the way ministry is carried out. Many more meetings and events are accomplished virtually. Regional "presence" is often a virtual presence rather than physical. Efforts to remain connected have included many more Zoom meetings and phone conversations. These adaptations are likely to continue into 2021.

The four priorities named in the 2020 vision continue to be priorities for the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region.

New Congregation Establishment - Two congregations-in-information are currently under the Region's oversight: Pacific Islander Agape Church, Pensacola, FL, and Iglesia Cristiana-Nuevo Comienzo, in Anniston, AL. There is a Project Advisory Team meeting regularly to give oversight and support of these new church efforts. The

Region is providing financial support to each project over its first three years. After that time it is envisioned that the church will be self-sustaining. One of these congregations was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and may need to remain under Regional oversight for a fourth year. Additional financial support may be needed for this congregation.

Congregational Transformation - The Region sponsors a congregational transformation event each biennium and has been doing so since 2006. This event offers congregations an opportunity to be challenged spiritually and it provides congregational leaders with tools for enriching their ministries, both internally and externally. This event had been scheduled for February, 2021, but it was postponed due to COVID-19. It has been re-scheduled for August 20-21, 2021, in hopes that physical gatherings will be safe by that time. The Region also partners with congregations that want assistance in processes that help them define their mission and purpose and develop specific plans for carrying out their mission and purpose. The Regional staff facilitate conversations when congregations are facing a transition in ministerial leadership. Those conversations can be helpful to congregations as they seek transformation with new leadership. The intentional and thoughtful work of preparing a congregational profile form can help a congregation move in new directions according to the leading of the Spirit.

Leadership Development - The Region has planning teams that develop retreats and camps for children, youth, young adults, men, women, and senior adults. All of these ministries to these age groups are aimed at strengthening them spiritually and growing their capacity for leadership in the church. Unfortunately many of these events had to be canceled in 2020. It is hoped that they can be offered in 2021, although it remains uncertain. A special fund has been created by the Region to support the involvement of young adults in ministries of the wider church. The Region also sponsors Colleague Groups for ministerial leaders every other year. These Colleague Groups will meet monthly in 2021 for worship, Bible study, book discussion, prayer, fellowship, and mutual support. Participants have given witness to the value of this ministry in their own development as leaders in the church. An active Committee on the Ministry works with ministers and ministerial candidates to equip them with the education and support they need to grow as leaders in the church. Special training opportunities are offered for both clergy and lay leaders on a variety of topics. A Ministry Support Network of mostly retired ministers makes regular contact with active ministers to offer friendship, support, and counsel, as needed. This network of care-givers is an expression of the Region's care for its clergy. The Region offers a "Healthy Boundaries" training for ministers annually. Each minister with standing is required to complete this workshop and repeat it after each 10 year period.

Commitment to Becoming Anti-Racist/Pro-Reconciling - The Region has an active Anti-Racism Team that works with congregations, Districts, and the Regional Board to provide anti-racism training. In 2020 the Team produced a new video, "Voices from the Community," along with a Discussion Guide, aimed at helping persons and congregations address systemic racism. The Anti-Racism Team also offers to clergy

and persons in Ministry Care a two-day anti-racism training event each biennium. Completion of this training is required for persons with ministerial standing. After each 10 years the workshop must be completed again. The Region is a partner with justice ministries that deal with inequities in society that result from systemic racism. Such ministries include Alabama Arise and Greater Birmingham Ministries. The Region is intentional to insure that planning bodies, including the Regional Board, have diverse membership and leadership. Changes have been made in the Region's By-Laws to insure diversity in leadership. Funds of the Region have been used to encourage diversity in camps/conference ministries and at other Regional events. The leadership of the Region is committed to building relationships as a means toward appreciating diversity and affirming those who are different. When relationships become authentic, the work toward racial justice comes more naturally. Obviously, there is much work left to do.

In these ways, and many others, the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region engages in meaningful work that addresses the priorities of the Church and gives witness to our calling to be a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. The Alabama-Northwest Florida Region is a stable, strong Region that enjoys a positive, mutually beneficial relationship with its clergy and congregations. Our Mission Statement is as follows:

The mission of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region is to encourage and equip its congregations and pastors for the ministry of Jesus Christ in local communities and throughout the world, while seeking to nurture them into deeper relationship with God, with each other, and with the whole Church.