

**INTERNATIONAL DISCIPLES WOMEN'S MINISTRIES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) UNITED STATES & CANADA**

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**REPORT 2608 TO THE GENERAL BOARD
FEBRUARY 2026**

Executive Summary

The year 2025 was a period of significant activity, expansion, and witness for Disciples Women's Ministries (DWM). Through program development, partnerships, advocacy, and faithful stewardship, DWM continued to live into its historic mission while responding to emerging needs both locally and globally. This report outlines accomplishments, ongoing initiatives, challenges, and future focus areas as we move forward together.

As we look ahead, it is vital to remember the origins of Disciples Women's Ministries. Founded in 1874, Disciples Women was born when women saw a need within the church and stepped forward in faithful response. That foundational vision—to serve, lead, and witness—remains unchanged in 2026. The church continues to need our active engagement in its mission, purpose, and vision.

An accomplishment from 2025

Woman-to-Woman Worldwide 2025

On September 3, 2025, fourteen Disciples women traveled to Kenya, Africa, gathering first in New York City from across the United States. The delegation visited communities in:

- Nairobi
- Turkana
- Kakuma Refugee Camp
- Maasai Mara

Participants encountered both the deep challenges women face—including educational barriers, period poverty, sexual harassment, food and water insecurity—and the resilient leadership women exercise through trade skills, entrepreneurship, and community-building.

The group visited a refugee camp and bore witness to the effects of reduced USAID support to the World Food Program. In response, DWM has begun collaborating with the OAIC in Nairobi to establish a borehole/well near Kakuma, with the goal of enabling sustainable access to water and food for women and their families.

A hope for 2026

Disciples Women's Endowment Fund (DWEF)

In 2025, DWEF issued **sixteen (16)** grants totaling **\$49,857.00**, reflecting an increase over 2024.

Grant funding supported:

- Woman-to-Woman Worldwide participants
- Women's retreats
- Leadership development
- Outreach initiatives

In 2026, the Disciples Women's Endowment Fund (DWEF) will launch its first Young Women's Initiative Scholarships, introduced during the 2025 General Assembly. These scholarships are designed for young Disciples women entering postsecondary education.

This initiative reflects DWEF's commitment to supporting women's leadership development, spiritual formation, and justice work within the Church. Recognizing the importance of engaging younger generations, DWEF seeks to affirm and empower young women early in their faith and leadership journeys—ensuring they feel seen, supported, and connected to the ongoing ministry of Disciples Women.

Application Timeline:

- Application Period: March 1 – April 30, 2026
- Award Announcements: May 2026

This milestone marks a new chapter for Disciples Women's Ministries, ensuring women of all ages are equipped and encouraged to take their place in shaping the Church's future.

Challenges Ahead

Women continue to face significant barriers related to equity, inclusion, accessibility, and reproductive rights. In many contexts, the historical contributions and presence of women have been further marginalized. According to **CNN**, more than **450,000 women have dropped out of the U.S. labor market since January 2025**, based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This is outside of pandemic-era declines and represents one of the steepest drops on record. This decline impacts the church's membership, its sustainability and capacity to be the church.

This underscores the ongoing need for support, development, and advocacy.

In response, DWM will take a small delegation of women to the United Nations 70th Commission on the Status of Women, March 9–13, 2026. The priority theme for this session focuses on ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws and practices, and addressing structural barriers. We fully understand that knowledge is power and the plan is to share what is learned.

A story of collaboration with another part of the church (GM, RM, congregation, etc.)

Disciples Women's Ministries continues its support of the World Council of Churches Thursdays in Black initiative. DW partnered with DOM/Global Ministries, Christian Unity, and Interfaith Ministry (CUIM) to co-sponsor a Resolution at General Assembly on The Commitment to the Thursdays in Black Campaign.

DWM partnered with Justice and Advocacy Ministry on an Immigration Summit January 28 –29, 2025 to first understand what is about to happen with the new administration and identify ways we can prepare to be of assistance to our siblings before and after deportation.

DWM participated in the **United Nations Commission on the Status of Women** 69th session (March 2025) through collaboration with Global Ministries and the UCC. Engagement focused on gender equity, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

DWM and HELM partnered to launch the Young Women's Initiative Scholarship in 2026. The scholarship will assist graduating seniors with plans to further their education by attending college or trade school. Four Scholarships will be awarded in May.

Something you desire each member of the General Board to take back to their local congregation about your General Ministry

While much has been accomplished in 2025, the work of Disciples Women's Ministries continues. These remain challenging and turbulent times, calling us to pray, educate, imagine, and act with courage and compassion. Together, through faith and faithful partnership, we will continue to make a lasting impact.

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