



Kansas MESSENGER

Christian Church in Kansas (Disciples of Christ)



Vol. 123, Ed. 7: July 2019

KANSAS DISCIPLES MEN

TWO RETREATS—ONE GREAT WEEKEND

Kansas Men of all ages are invited to a weekend filled with fun, fellowship, and learning at Tawakoni. The weekend starts with KDM Fall Retreat, Sept. 27-28, led by Director of Disciples Men's ministries of the General Church, Greg Alexander.



As Associate RM then Regional Minister in Kentucky, he developed men's ministry resources and worked with ecumenical men's leaders

both nationally and internationally. He will give four presentations on "What it Means to be a Man Today."

The retreat will begin at 5 p.m. on Friday and conclude shortly after dinner on Saturday. A pre-event work project is planned for Friday afternoon, and a Friday afternoon golf outing is on the agenda if at least four golfers pre-register.

The 5th annual men's Odyssey Experience will begin at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Sept 28.

Originally conceived as a mentorship program, the Men's Odyssey Project is an ongoing effort to nurture Christ-like character in men of all ages. The retreat introduces the intentional process of reflecting on eight character qualities and scriptural teachings: compassion, faithfulness, generosity, humbleness, respectfulness, responsibility, reliability, and self-control. Then, participants are encouraged to live out these character traits through a daily act of service.

Participants receive an eight week "Rule of Life" book designed to help them develop the habits of living the character of Jesus in everyday life. They also receive a guide for a monthly men's Odyssey group designed to encourage men to reflect on the nature of our Lord and Savior.

Register by Sept. 13 and pay online for either retreat at www.kansasdisciples.org, or download a registration form and mail with payment to the Topeka Regional Office.

COMING EVENTS

- Summer Camps
May 28-July 20
- Disciples Connect & Equip Event
August 10 Pg. 3
- Disciples Men Retreat Pg. 1
September 27-28
- Disciples Men Odyssey
Experience Pg. 1
September 28-29
- Disciples Women Retreat . . . Pg. 3
October 2-4; 4-6
- KDYC Youth Convention . . . Pg. 3
November 8-10
- Tawakoni Gala
Tentative— Fall 2020
- KDW SpiritFest
March 28, 29, & April 4

IT'S CHRISTMAS IN JULY! SUPPORT YOUR REGIONAL MINISTRIES

The Kansas region works **CONNECT** our congregations and members with each other and with the wider church and **EQUIP** them through leadership and ministry skills training to transform individual congregations and the world around them.

Your gifts to the Annual Fund, Messenger Fund, and Disciples Center at Tawakoni support regional programs and ministries.

These include Disciples Men's and Women's programs, summer camping programs, pastoral care, leadership opportunities, Kansas Messenger publication, the regional website, and social media.

Give through your congregation, give online at www.kansasdisciples.org/ give or mail your check—made out to the Christian Church in Kansas—to the Topeka Regional Office.

100% of your designated gifts remain in Kansas.

Consider setting up regional gifts on a recurring gift plan. With recurring gifts, you have the convenience and flexibility to create and change recurring regional gifts to any fund or ministry.

Thank you for your support!



Submit articles for the August - September issue by **July 22**

Send text and photos to messenger@kansasdisciples.org
All articles are edited for clarity, conciseness, tone, and space.

PRAYER 4 PARTNERS

From the Region:

- **Horton First CC**
Pastor Ron Cobb
- **Fredonia First CC**
Pastor Claude Shue
- **Douglass, First CC**
Pastor Judy Voyles
- **United Church of Kensington**
Pastor Emily Blank
- **Liberal First CC**
[In Search]

From the General Church:

- Pray for those traveling to General Assembly July 21-24 as they conduct the business of the General Church, fellowship with friends and colleagues, and worship together.

From our Global Mission Partners in East Asia & the Pacific:

- **Judy Chan, Hong Kong**
Christian Council
- **Deborah Clemens,**
Ohwa College, Micronesia
- **Eleazar Fernandez**
United Church of Christ on the Philippines

THOUGHTS FROM YOUR REGIONAL MINISTER GROWING YOUR CHURCH



From time to time, church leaders ask what can be done to help their congregation grow. That question doesn't have a simple answer, or one that will fit every situation.

Part of the reason is that the community in which each congregation resides is different. Some are growing and some are shrinking. Effective approaches to church growth vary depending on the situation.

Another reason centers around the willingness to make the fundamental changes that will be necessary to reach new generations of people. These changes mean giving up some of our basic understandings of what it means to be the church and the practices of church life that have meant a lot to the current membership. Diana Butler Bass talks about this as the ability to practice radical Christian hospitality — the ability to really make room in our common life for

someone new to feel like they belong.

Making significant progress on any challenge requires effective leadership, which can come from both ministers and laity. The Kansas Leadership Center offers high-quality training to help people exercise leadership more effectively, whether in church, at work, or in other organizations; in turn helping those groups more readily accomplish their purposes.

2019 is the second year of partnership with the Kansas Leadership Center, a partnership that has allowed us to send some 35-40 individuals from 20 different congregations to their training programs. 17 more training slots are available for 2019; we do not expect this grant to renew for 2020. If you are want to learn how to help your congregation make progress more effectively, go to www.kansasdisciples.org/grants or contact me to sign up for this training.

By Ken Marston



In the winter when all the leaves are off the trees, the tree that is visible from my prayer spot has two branches that form an ichthus. It reminds me of the presence of the Holy One as I read, contemplate, and pray. In the summer when the leaves have filled the tree with life and beauty, the ichthus is hidden from view. Tucked away among the new season's foliage, I can trust the unseen.

NURTURING YOUR SPIRIT

By Debbie Griffith, Goodland First Christian Church

Throughout the seasons of life and in the events of our journeys, we experience the Lord in different ways. The purposes are, at times, clear and readily seen. Then there are times when it is not clear and our view of God may seem obscured. It is then that we have to trust that He is ever present. Sometimes the very thing that seemed to get in the way can be a blessing in disguise!



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DISCIPLES CONNECT & EQUIP

Kansas Disciples Regional Gathering

Saturday, August 10, 9 a.m.—4 p.m.
Disciples Center at Tawakoni

Join us as we combine our new vision “Together, we connect and equip,” and our Kansas Leadership Center training in our 2019 regional gathering.

The day will begin with registration and a community sing-a-long at 9 a.m., followed by opening worship.

The mid-day food court will feature a variety of food prepared by Disciples Men’s and Women’s groups including hotdogs, tacos, grilled corn on the cob, cotton candy, funnel cake, cupcakes, and cookies.

In the closing worship we will recognize retiring Regional Minister Renee Bridwell. In addition to worship, workshops, and fellowship, there will be fun and renewal, too. Special programs for children kindergarten through grade 5 and youth activities for grades 6-12 are also planned. Child care will be available for children 5 years and younger.

Pre-order a regional t-shirt for \$10 and pick up at the event. Price increases to \$15 at #DCE; sizes are not guaranteed. Design preview available in July.

Register and pay online at www.kansasdisciples.org or download a registration form and mail with payment to the Topeka Regional Office.

FAITH THAT OVERFLOWS

KANSAS DISCIPLES WOMEN FALL RETREAT

The 2019 KDW Women’s Retreat is getting closer every day! Join us on October 2- 4 or October 4-6 as we gather at Camp Tawakoni to celebrate **Faith That Overflows!**



NEW: Kirby Gould, Vice President for the North Central Zone of the Christian Church Foundation, will keynote the event. She serves the regions of Kansas, Greater Kansas City, Mid America, and Upper Midwest, assisting Disciples churches with endowments, permanent funds, investments, planned gifts, and bequests.

Gould grew up in McPherson as an active participant in regional and youth programs. She is a frequent speaker at conferences and seminars across the country.

Additional activities include a painting workshop (\$30 extra), massages (extra fee), service projects including paper goods for the camp, stuffed animals and fleece blankets for the Child Advocacy Center, and much more!

Registration cost of \$100 includes lodging at the camp, five meals, and program expenses.

SAVE! Register by Friday, September 6, to save \$15!

Register and pay online at www.kansasdisciples.org or download a registration form and mail with payment to the Topeka Regional Office.

KANSAS DISCIPLES YOUTH CONVENTION

Rev. Virzola “Virgi” Law will keynote the 2019 Kansas Disciples Youth Convention.

Spend time with other youth, grades 6-12, from across the region Nov 8-10 at Hutchinson Conference Center.

Law is well-known among Disciples for her 12 years of service including most recently, supporting the XPLOR program of the National Benevolent Association.

Gather your friends and mark your calendar! Registration information will be available soon.



SAVE THE DATE: 2020 SPIRITFEST

Mark your calendar now for 2020 SpiritFest, March 28, 29, and April 4. Locations are to be determined.

JOIN DCEF IN DES MOINES THIS SUMMER

Next month, thousands of Disciples from all across North America will gather in the Hawkeye State for General Assembly – our denomination’s chance to worship, study, and conduct the business of the Christian Church (DOC) together.

To help this year’s biennial celebration start off with a bang, Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF) will host SHINE 2019 from 8:30 – Noon on Saturday, July 20, in Room 317-318 of the Convention Center in Des Moines, Iowa.

Change the way you use space and the possible opportunities at your church by exploring trends, hearing stories, and developing an innovative perspective. Discover what you can achieve at your church and ways to connect meaningfully with your community. Cost is \$20 per person. Register online at <http://www.disciplescef.org/>.



REFLECTIONS FROM KCYF MISSION WEEK

By Patrick Nixon, Pittsburg First Christian Church
Mission Week Director

The first week of June, 19 youth and 8 adults traveled to Denver for KCYF Mission Week and slept in the basement of a church.

"I never knew one week could change my life in such a way," said Sydney DeArvil, Salina Belmont Boulevard CC. "Working at Tennyson was one of the most humbling experiences I've ever had and I'm so grateful for it."

Participants were divided up into two task groups. One group worked at Tennyson Center, which is a home for children and teens. Most of the children are there through court order because the parents are not able to take care of them.

"This place taught me to consider people's past before judging them for their actions," said DeArvil. "I have also learned how to put a positive spin on almost everything and it has made the way I look at things so much better."



"This trip was very important because we had the opportunity to show the kids real kindness and love," echoed Lindsay Brown, Salina Belmont Boulevard CC. "We tried to bring joy to every child that we were able to interact with. I'm so grateful for this life changing opportunity to spread God's Love."

The other group worked on various hands-on tasks around the Denver area. They worked at Central Church, where we stayed, at Tennyson Center, and at their church camp in Colorado Springs.

In the evening we enjoyed the mountains and some recreational activities around Denver.

We should be proud of our kids. They worked hard and represented their churches well. We often hear bad things about youth, but this trip showed that the future of the church will be

WEEK OF COMPASSION AT THE BORDER



"I was surrounded by our South American local partners when I saw the heartbreaking image of Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez and his young daughter, Angie Valeria. The two of them drowned trying to swim across the Rio Grande into the United States. They died believing our country to be a safe place; a second chance." —Rev. Vy Nguyen, Week of Compassion Executive Director.

The immigration crisis is deeply complex. There is no easy way to address the overwhelming need. However, as people of faith, we respond with love and compassion, working towards long-term solutions for those in great need. Here's how.

For the last several years, Week of Compassion has responded to the border crisis through partners such as Church World Service; Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries; Disciples Refugee and Immigration Ministries; and Centro Romero in San Diego and Tijuana. These partners provide shelter, meet basic needs, and provide legal counsel and advocacy services. More recently, our *Keep Families and Children Together* fund has supported Disciples families--separated by current immigration policies--with emergency supplies and support in this very difficult time.

Beyond meeting those urgent needs, we are coordinating with partners to help immigrants seeking asylum. They are informed of their rights, and have access to resources to ensure a more humane experience.

A wide range of issues drive this mass migration, so our response must be multi-faceted. When we support sustainable development projects in Central America, we help communities provide for their own needs and create more opportunity, which means that more families stay together. More resources stay there, making the community even stronger, so that fewer feel compelled to make the life-threatening desert journey north.

When you support Week of Compassion, you support the work of our wider church at the border and in Central America, where we work to make life more sustainable. Together, we answer the call to greet the stranger as though they were Jesus himself.

See the full article at www.weekofcompassion.org/stories.

IN MEMORIAM:

Kala Barnett, 70, former president of Kansas Disciples Women, died June 10 in Dighton. She also served on the Regional Board. Services were held at Dighton First CC.

Rhea Sloan, 78, wife of retired minister Rev. Ronald Sloan, died June 14. She was a member of Fairview Christian Church, now The Dock Christian Church, in Wichita. A memorial has been established in Rhea's name for Rivercross Hospice.