



Kansas Messenger

Christian Church in Kansas (Disciples of Christ)



www.kansasdisciples.org

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CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERING SUPPORTS REGIONAL MINISTRY PROGRAMS



The annual Christmas Offering supports regional ministries in 31 regions across the United States and Canada. Through this offering ministers are nurtured, and congregations are provided opportunities for work and worship.

The 2022 Christmas Offering will be received on Dec. 11 and 18.

Kansas Disciples are growing into a new vision! Throughout the region, significant efforts are being made to nurture and support those who are following a call to congregational ministry. Monthly clergy meetings and an annual retreat are two of the ways in which this happens each year.

We are working together to combat systematic racism and promote reconciliation. Through a grant from the Kansas Bible Chair (KBC), we are developing training in anti-racism/pro-reconciliation missions.



We are moving forward with plans to establish a regional ministry position for New Church Ministries. In doing so, we are prioritizing new church plantings, growth, and missions.

Church leaders continue to have opportunities for spiritual growth and leadership training. These include boundaries training, workshops, retreats, and webinars on various subjects. These trainings featured Kansas leaders and General Church representatives. A partnership grant

from the Kansas Leadership Center and a KBC grant allowed church leaders to attend leadership training sessions.

The region's summer camping program encourages our future church leaders and establishes friendships that go beyond their time at camp. Youth retreats, mission trips, and camps build on faith as participants live out what they have been taught.

Regional communications ministries continue to evolve as we connect Disciples across Kansas. The *Kansas Messenger* is provided monthly. The regional website, camp website, and social media pages are updated.



Disciples Women programs continue to provide leadership growth and fellowship opportunities through events such as Spirit Fest and fall retreats. We continue to strengthen Disciples Men programs to equip and empower men for ministry in their congregations, in the region, and beyond.

There are many opportunities for connecting and equipping our Kansas Region. The 2022 Christmas Offering is an opportunity for you to invest in these ministries. All funds from this offering remain in Kansas and support the regional ministry.

We appreciate your support and prayers through this Advent season. You can give to the Christmas offering through your congregation, your Engage account, or at www.kansasdisciples.org/give



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New Church Ministry

TBA, Regional Minister of New Church Ministry

**We would love to
connect with you!**

Connect with us on

[Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)

THOUGHTS FROM YOUR REGIONAL MINISTER

The Purpose of Advent

BY TOM STANLEY, CO-REGIONAL MINISTER & PRESIDENT

As we enter the Advent season, we look forward to the birth of Jesus, Christmas Cantatas, Christmas morning, and many other things! But is that all we are looking forward to? Is that all Advent has become?

Advent is the season of waiting and preparing. Advent is the season when the Church prepares to receive our Lord! Advent is the season we wait for, when God's love is finally revealed in God's Messiah, Jesus the Christ. It is a season of expectant waiting. Waiting patiently is a challenge for all of us! But it is amazing and wonderful to know that God's love has been and will continue to be revealed to us.

I am writing this today so that you will not skip Advent! Don't rush headlong from Thanksgiving to Christmas! The season of Advent is a season where we get to prepare to receive Jesus. To use the words of John the Baptist, we get to "prepare the way of the Lord and make it straight."

This season in the life of the Church is not a passive time! It is a time to prepare, get ready, and help others see Jesus! So, I

hope you will use this season in the life of the Church to prepare yourselves and the way for Jesus on Christmas morning!

Thank you much for your love and grace; I am grateful

for your gifts to the whole Church, DMF, the annual fund, and the Disciple's Special Day offerings enabling ministry around Kansas and the world!

You are helping to train and educate clergy; you are training lay leaders and growing disciples everywhere! So, thank you on behalf of your siblings in faith around our region and the world.

Shalom, hope, and joy to you this season!

Tom



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES AROUND THE REGION

To encourage greater connections between our Disciples Churches, we're sharing this list of Christmas observances. If you are somewhere else in the region instead of your home church, if the snow is too great for you to get to your own church but the roads are clear on your side of town, if the kids can't stay up for the 11 p.m. service, or if you always have Christmas Eve supper at 6 p.m. and want a different service time, here are some options.

These observances are for Christmas Eve. Not every church responded in time for this publication. We will update the listing on our website as more information becomes available.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| • Atchison, First Christian Church | 6 p.m. |
| • Augusta, First Christian Church | 7 p.m. |
| • Clearwater, First Christian Church | 7 p.m. |
| • Emporia, First Christian Church | 8 p.m. |
| • Eureka, Christian and Congregational Church | 6 p.m. |
| • Girard, First Christian Church | 7 p.m. |
| • Girard, First Christian Church | 7 p.m. |
| • Goodland, First Christian Church | 5 p.m. |
| • Gorham Community Church | 5 p.m. |
| • Great Bend, First Christian Church | 6 p.m. (Traditional) |
| | 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. (Modern) |
| • Leavenworth, First Christian Church | 7 p.m. |
| • Lewis Christian Church | 6 p.m. |
| • Manhattan, First Christian Church | 5:30 p.m. |
| • McPherson, First Christian Church | 6:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. |
| • Scott City, First Christian Church | 6 p.m. |
| • Smith Center, First Christian Church | 7 p.m. |
| • Topeka, West Side Christian Church | 9 p.m. |
| • Wichita, Hillside Christian Church | 7 p.m. |
| • Wichita, Riverside Christian Church | 5 p.m. and 11 p.m. |

JOIN OUR TEXT ALERTS SYSTEM

Get CCK news on your phone wherever you are. Sign-up to receive the latest CCK news and event information by text message.



There are three ways to join:

1. Text KSMESSENGER to 316-465-5352 and follow the on-screen prompts.
2. Go to our "News" tab at www.kansasdisciples.org/news. Look for the "Text logo" on the right-hand side of the page.
3. Call the CCK Communications Office, 316-775-1236

This is just one more example of how your Communications team is working to connect you to the ministries of your Kansas Region. You will normally receive no more than one or two text message per week as a part of this service. Standard SMS and data charges apply.

NEWS FROM THE PEWS



A LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

Loss is a natural part of life. There are many things we grieve and mourn – loss of a loved one, loss of a job or financial stability, loss of health, of peace, of a marriage or other relationship, of a dream...and so much more.

These may lead to feelings of emptiness, anger, guilt, withdrawal from others, difficulty focusing, questions about faith or spirituality, or even physical responses. There is no “set” or “proper” way to grieve and grief comes in many forms.

A *Longest Night Service* will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 21, at Augusta First Christian Church, 1600 State Street. This is the Winter Solstice, the shortest day and longest night of the year. At this time of the year when people are joyfully preparing for Christmas with family gatherings, presents, songs, and light displays, people who are in grief may feel even more lost and out of place.

This service is designed to let people know that it's okay to grieve a loss and to offer them a safe place to be themselves. It will include prayers, songs, readings, a short meditation, and the opportunity to pray with elders of the church. We urge you to invite any friends that might benefit from attending. No need to RSVP.

HAVE NEWS TO SHARE?

*Your Church could be featured here!
Submit your articles and pictures to us.*

We are always glad to receive your news articles and photographs for publication. Submit your items at messenger@kansasdisciples.org or online at:

www.kansasdisciples.org/km-submissions

The *Kansas Messenger* editorial team reserves the right to edit all materials for relevance, clarity, and space. Submission deadline for the December issue is:

Monday, December 19

HOLIDAY FARMERS' MARKET AT GIRARD FCC

Join Girard First Christian Church for their Holiday Farmers' Market from 4-6 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 13.

Available for sale are cakes, cookies, candies, pies, meals, and more.



CAMP NEWS

TAWAKONI WINTER WORK DAYS

Grab your tools and your gloves! We will have winter camp work days Thursday, Dec. 8, through Saturday, Dec. 10. We will begin each morning at 10 a.m. in Tawakoni's Dining Hall.

Anyone and everyone are welcome to join us. Tawakoni staff is so appreciative of our volunteers

and their dedication to helping make our camp run smoothly.

Planned projects include installing a bump post around the new gate call box, winterizing cabins, and removing old flooring and installing new flooring in Cabin 1. These projects are subject to change and/or additional projects may be added based on weather, number of volunteers in attendance, and supply availability.

Meals are provided for all volunteers and overnight lodging is available upon request. If you are interested in coming out, whether for a day or for all three days, contact Camp Manager Olivia See at revoliviasee@kansasdisciples.org, call 316-775-1222 or, text 316-207-6174.



NEWS FROM YOUR REGION

YOUTH SPRING RETREAT 2023



Get ready for the 2023 Spring Retreat at Disciples Center! Youth, grades 6-12, are invited out to the camp Friday, March 3, through Sunday, March 5, for a weekend for fun, faith, and friends.

Our theme is "Spirit Moves" and Rev. Derek

Tompkins of Weatherford, Texas will share how to join in the movement of God's Spirit around us. The retreat will begin at 7 p.m. on Friday and conclude at 10 a.m. on Sunday. Attendees are expected to eat dinner before arriving Friday night.

Activities will include games, a service project, music, and more favorites from summer camp. Don't miss out on a fantastic event! A specific schedule is in the works. More information will be posted on our website as it becomes available.

Each church is asked to provide an adult sponsor for every five youth they bring or partner with another church to do so.

The cost is \$80 per person for the weekend, including meals and lodging. Registration closes Thursday, Feb. 23, to allow us to plan for your arrival. Late registrations (after Feb. 23) will only be accepted by phone and at the event organizer's discretion.

Registration is open at www.tawakoni.org/kcyf-spring-retreat/.

KDW CALENDARS FOR SALE

Disciples Women is offering a 2023 calendar filled with pictures, both past, and present of Disciples Women events and gatherings. There are so many memories in the pictures and the calendars make a great gift for Christmas.

Proceeds from the calendar benefit the Camp Tawakoni tractor fund, KCH Fellowship of John, and the KDW Care and Share Fund. The cost is \$20 each or you can purchase a KDW Dining with Disciples cookbook and a 2023 calendar for \$30.

Contact Carla Pearson at carla.pearson58@gmail.com to arrange delivery.

OFFICES CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

Remember your regional offices will be closed Dec. 24 through Jan. 2. All staff will be in Great Bend for a staff team building event on Friday, Dec. 16.

REMEMBER YOUR YEAR-END GIFTS

All 2022 yearend gifts need to be mailed by Dec. 20 or given electronically by Dec. 30. Gifts received after this will be processed in January.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS REGISTRATIONS OPENS IN JANUARY

SPIRITUAL RETREAT

Rev. Dr. Paul Koch, Co-Regional Minister for the Christian Church in Mid-America, will facilitate the 2023 Spiritual Retreat. The retreat will begin at 2 p.m. on Thursday, March 9, to 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 11, at the Heartland Center for Spirituality, 3600 Broadway, Great Bend.

Cost is \$135. Registration opens in January. Registration deadline is Feb. 23.

BOUNDARIES TRAINING: BACK TO BASICS

All clergy and church leaders should be informed about the legal and ethical issues in church ministry.

CCK will host three opportunities for Boundaries Training in 2023:

- Tuesday, March 21, Great Bend FCC
- Saturday, May 20, Tawakoni
- Thursday, Oct. 19, Topeka FCC.

Training, facilitated by Ken Marston, CCK Co-Regional Minister, begins at 10 a.m. and concludes around 3:30 p.m.

Cost is \$35 for clergy and \$10 for lay leaders. Registration closes two weeks prior to each session.

KDW SPIRIT FEST

Disciples Women are invited to attend one of two KDW Spirit Fest events:

- Saturday, April 22, West Side Christian Church, Topeka
- Saturday May 6, Woodridge Christian Church, Wichita

The event's theme is, "Living your Faith." Gail Goolsby, an educator, life coach, counselor and former school principal in Afghanistan, is the keynote speaker.

CLERGY RETREAT

All clergy are invited to a three-day, two-night retreat Tuesday, April 25, through Thursday, April 27, at Tawakoni. Featured theologian is still being planned. This is an excellent opportunity for all clergy to step away and be refreshed and renewed in their ministry.

TIME TO GATHER YOUR YEARBOOK DATA—ALEX DATABASE REPORTS DUE FEB 28



The ALEX Yearbook reporting period for 2022 data will open on Sunday, Jan. 15. Church reports are due to your regional Business Office electronically by Tuesday, Feb. 28.

Information in ALEX will not be sold or shared with third party vendors. ALEX is an exclusive application built only for Disciples congregations, regions, and general ministries to use. Congregation statistics in ALEX, like the white pages in the printed Yearbook, are available to individuals, congregations, ministers, regions, and general ministries that purchase a subscription for online access.

A worksheet is available as you gather your 2022 information for the report. This year's worksheet significantly reduces the amount of data requested to make reporting less cumbersome and improve response rate.

Each congregation should have one user with the role of Congregational Reporter. An ALEX user with this role must submit the annual ALEX Yearbook Report electronically. Paper worksheets will not be accepted. Regional staff cannot enter church data.

If you are the Congregational Reporter, you can update your congregation's information by logging into ALEX and going to the Yearbook (ribbon icon) section. Click the **Edit Entry** button. To save and submit your changes, go to the **Submit** tab, enter your name, and click the **Submit** button.

Thank you for your partnership as we prepare for this year-end task.

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL CHURCH

REGISTER FOR THE 2023 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is excited to announce that registration is now open for the 2023 General Assembly. The event is scheduled for July 29 – Aug. 1 in Louisville, Ky. It will be the first time in four years that the church, as a whole, has gathered together in-person and digitally.



Registration for the 2023 Assembly, themed “Kindom of God, Within Us, Among Us” is now open at www.ga.disciples.org/

The 2023 General Assembly is a call for Disciples to strengthen their relationship with God, both as individuals and as a part of God's community through an expansive gathering of the church in Louisville. God's limitless imagination holds so many possibilities for our church.

This four-day event will encourage Disciples who gather to celebrate the way that God's expansive love connects each of us as “kin” and to be part of the larger Kindom of God.

Join us July 29-Aug. 1 for worship, workshops, Bible study, opportunities to explore Louisville, mission projects, and the sacred work of the church for children, youth, and adults across the life of the church.



APPLY FOR DISCIPLES PEACE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

BY BRIAN FREDERICK-GRAY,
DPF MISSION DIRECTOR

The best part of my job as Mission Director at Disciples Peace Fellowship (DPF) is getting to work with

our amazing DPF Peace Interns! While the work of the Peace Interns happens in the summertime, the work to find the next cohort of Peace Interns is already underway!

The DPF Peace Intern Program has been around for nearly 50 years, empowering young adults to be ambassadors for peace and justice. It is a life-changing 12-week, paid internship for anyone age 21 and over.

The last several summers the DPF Executive Committee and I have worked hard to create a hybrid model experience where Peace Interns spend most of their time on staff at in-person Church Camps, and a few weeks of their summer working remotely with Disciples Justice Ministries. You can learn more about the Peace Internship at the DPF Website.

The application portal: disciplespeace.org/apply.

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL CHURCH

KCH's 'POWER OF ONE' CAMPAIGN

Karen Sturchio, CEO of the Kansas Christian Home (KCH) is promoting an opportunity to help KCH residents with the three plagues of aging: loneliness, helplessness, and boredom. The simple program, POWER OF ONE (YOU), asks you to combat these issues by providing someone to love, something to do and something to look forward to that will improve the quality and quantity of life at KCH.

THE POWER OF ONE DAY – There are many “one day” opportunities to participate in playing games, joining in music, or sharing your passion with residents of KCH.

THE POWER OF ONE RELATIONSHIP – Residents benefit from those who interact on a personal level. Volunteer to help with monthly parties, decorate for holidays, or use your imagination for this ministry.

THE POWER OF ONE GIFT – Through the generous monetary gifts of KCH supporters over \$300,000 of charitable care are provided each year. Each and every donation is used for the care and comfort of our residents.

One day a year is all it takes to fill KCH with joy.

EASE YOUR ANXIETY WITH NBA'S SOUL CARE: WARMTH AND WELLNESS EVENT



Join NBA's Mental Health & Wellness Director, Joselyn Spence, along with other guests as we share a moment to pause, process, and care for ourselves this holiday season. The Soul Care Event begins at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 14.

We encourage you to grab your favorite mug, something soothing to sip, and a cozy chair as you prepare for an evening of SoulCare focused on wellness practices.

Want to share the moment? Schedule a “watch party” with your family, Bible study group, or congregation!

Joselyn Spence serves as the Director of the NBA's Mental Health and Wellness Initiative. In this role, Joselyn works to design and implement programs that promote holistic wellness through the creation of learning resources for clergy and community leaders. She is passionate about mental health care, holistic wellness, communal care ethics, and spirituality.

Please register below to receive the Zoom, YouTube, and Facebook links to watch live.

JOIN US JAN. 25-27 FOR REMIND & RENEW 2023 TRANSFORMING JUSTICE



Registration is now open for Remind & Renew 2023. As of now, Remind & Renew will be both in-person and

online with presentations using a conference platform called Whova. Register Now on Whova.

This service also allows R&R attendees to set up meetings in their own small groups in-person or online. When you register for Remind & Renew, you'll get more information on how to use Whova, including its smartphone app. The schedule is under construction and will be published soon.

Theme statement: We are called to be seekers and doers of justice to transform our families and communities into places of just living. Remind & Renew 2023 will focus on the ways our social justice efforts can be transformative for society.

Presenters:

- Kazu Haga
- Terence Crutcher Foundation
- *The Many* will lead our worship times and present an evening concert.

For more information about presenters, visit the Remind & Renew webpage.

HAVE YOU TRIED ENGAGE?

This easy-to-use, mobile-optimized system allows you to give securely online, set up auto draft giving and view your giving history at your convenience. ENGAGE goes beyond online giving to also provide you a way to connect with others in the region through common interest groups.

You can also update contact information and register for regional and district events.

To get started, go to www.kansasdisciples.org/give and click the ENGAGE portal button. From there, follow the on-screen instructions to create an account or log into your existing account. If creating a new account, you will receive an email to reset your password and confirm the creation of your account.

After account creation, you can update your information, manage regional and district giving, and register for events all from one login.

IN TRANSITION

Hillside Christian Church's associate pastor, **Etienna Mertel**, concluded her ministry. She has accepted a call as senior pastor at Clearwater First Christian Church.

IN CELEBRATION

IN MEMORIUM

Rev. Kathy Bryant, retired intentional interim pastor from Kansas, died Nov. 16 at the age of 74 after a brief illness.

She was an ordained minister and served churches in Missouri, Arizona, Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma for over 35 years. In Kansas, she served at Douglass First Christian Church and Arkansas City Central Christian Church among others. Her husband Don Bryant was the minister at Wellington FCC.

She was trained as a vocalist and early in her career she taught art in schools. Her love of the arts led her to do extensive training in the use of Arts in Spirituality, which she used well in helping churches develop a vision for their ministry as well as in promoting spiritual development.

A memorial service was held on Saturday, Dec. 3, at Foothills Christian Church, Glendale, Ariz.

ETIENNA MERTEL ORDAINED

The Reverend Etienna Mertel was ordained into Christian ministry on Saturday, Nov. 20, at Hillside Christian Church in Wichita with many friends, family, and associates in attendance.

Rev. Dr. Robin McGonigle provided the sermon and Co-Regional Ministers



Rev. Ken Marston and Rev. Tom Stanley represented the Kansas Region. Other participants in the service of ordination included Rev. Arthur Stewart, senior pastor of Riverside CC; Rev. Titus James, retired pastor; and Rev. Jerry Muncy, senior pastor of Hillside CC.



Mertel studied Christian Spiritual Formation and Leadership at Friends University, Wichita, and is a graduate of Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, Okla.