



Bryant, Sandra

Sandra Bryant is the Executive Director of All Peoples Community Center, a position she has held for the past thirty-two years. Her first experience with All Peoples was as a two-year-old in their day care facility. Sandra Bryant is a life-long and active member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She is an Elder of All Peoples Christian Church, Los Angeles. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Pacific Southwest Region of the Christian Church. On the General Level of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Sandra served as the First Vice Moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. She served as a Trustee of the National Convocation of the African American Congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She was a member of the Board of Directors and Administrative Committee of the Denomination. She is a former member of the anti-racism committee of the Pacific Southwest Region Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Sandra received her Bachelor of Science Degree in the area of Social Work and attained her Master’s Degree in Social Work Administration. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in the State of California.

In 1987, Sandra became the first female member of the Los Angeles Host Lions Club, chartered in 1914, and in 1992 was installed as its first female President. In 1999, Sandra received the Melvin Jones Fellows Award from her club, one of the highest honors in Lionism. Sandra has been the recipient of numerous other awards and honors including: Durfee Fellowship Recipient, 1999 Lewis Hines Award Recipient by the National Child Labor Committee, 1999 California Association of Human Relations Organizations Civil Rights Leadership Award, Pioneer Woman of the year 2000 and 2008 representing the Ninth Council District of the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Sheppard Award, Martin Luther King Disciple of the year award, presented by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and Woman of the Year representing California’s 59th Assembly District in honor of Women’s history month. She is committed to being a voice for change in her community.

Sandra is married to Leo Bryant for over 30 years; has one adult son, and one granddaughter.

We are grateful to God for the lives and legacies of these African American Disciples who have made a difference in our lives. This publication is the fifth in a series about Black Disciples who have or continue to make a difference in the life of our church.

Black Disciples

Preston Tayllor photograph courtesy of Disciples of Christ Historical Society

Who Make A Difference #5

Black people have made an enormous contribution to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This brochure contains a brief biography of African Americans whose lives are significant parts of our Christian life.



Parker, Elder Patricia (1963–2015)

Elder Patricia Parker was an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as of May 2009. Elder Parker began serving at East Percy Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Greenwood, Miss., as the transitional Pastor in June 2001. In March 2002, history was made when Elder Patricia Parker was installed as the first African American Pastor of a Disciples of Christ church in the state of Mississippi.

Elder Parker was a 1980 honor graduate of Amanda Elzy High School, Greenwood, Miss. She was also a graduate of Alcorn State University from which she received her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing in 1984. She later earned certification as a Critical Care Nurse in 1995 and later Trauma Life Support. She was employed with Greenwood Leflore Hospital, Greenwood, Miss.

Elder Parker was an active member on the Local, State, Regional, and National level with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She served as both President of the Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention (MCMC) and President of District IV. She served on the Great River Region Board, the Regional Commission of Ministry for District II, and the Planning Committee for the Disciples Home Missions Black Ministers Retreat, and the Disciples Women's Joint Cabinet as Workshop Director. In addition, she was a Regional Elder for the Great River Region. Elder Parker was a member of the Itta Bena Ministerial Alliance in Itta Bena, Miss.; the Black Minister's Fellowship of the National Convocation; the American Association of Critical Care; and Theta Pi Zeta Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.



Kenoly, Jacob (1876-1911)

Jacob Kenoly was the first graduate of the Southern Christian Institute in 1902, it was during his years at SCI, that his desire to dedicate himself, -heart, mind and body- to evangelism and education in Africa. This would eventually lead him to the creation of Liberia Christian Institute, which Kenoly founded, nurtured and literally built from the ground up. He saved for two years in order to make the journey to Liberia. Kenoly stepped onto African soil with only the clothes on his back and precious little money. For two years he lived among the people and nearly died from disease and exposure. He earned credibility by teaching their children and soon had built—with his own hands — a school and farm.

By 1911 his mission school began to bear fruit. J. B. Lehman described the work as one which "told its wonderful story in the transformation of the lives of the people." His

work of preaching and teaching, of declaring of the gospel and of working for the good of the lives of the people among whom he lived, resulted in at least two of Kenoly's most promising students continuing their education at SCI. The cycle was beginning to repeat itself: the faith, hope and love planted in Jacob's heart and mind years earlier, in Mississippi, resulted in a harvest of faith in Liberia.

Jacob Kenoly embraced his mission, and loved his students. Not only did he proclaim good news to their hearts, and not only did he equip their minds with knowledge and their hands with skills, he also nourished their bodies. How poignant, and yet how tragic, that just as the Liberia Christian Institute was founded to bear its best fruit, Kenoly died while fishing to feed his beloved students. His death mirrored his life: a full sacrifice for the sake of the gospel and for the good of God's beloved people. Jacob Kenoly lived by faith in the liberating power of the gospel.



Gillett, Charisse

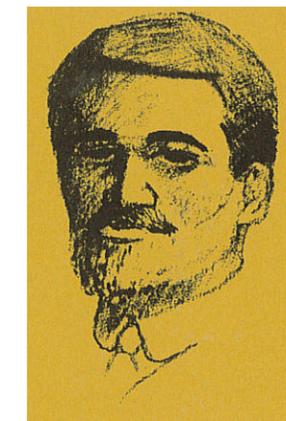
Dr. Charisse L. Gillett was named president of Lexington Theological Seminary in September 2011 and is the former vice-president of administration and special projects at Lexington Theological Seminary. She is a former member of the Lexington Theological Seminary Board of Trustees and officer of the Board (2005-2010). Dr. Gillett is the first African-American and the first women called to the presidency of Lexington Theological Seminary.

She served as the moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada (2003-2005). In this capacity, she presided over the work of the administrative committee, general board and the 2005 General Assembly in Portland, Ore. She has served on numerous boards and committees including service

as the Secretary of the National Convocation Board (2002-2005), the Foster Parent Association of Fayette County (2007-2011), the African-American Clergy Leadership Development Committee (2002-2012), Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (HELM) Board of Directors (2006-2010), the Disciples of Christ Historical Society Board of Directors (2015-Present) and the Transylvania University's Presidential Taskforce on Diversity. She has also served on the Black Disciples Endowment Fund Board of Directors and helped to plan and implement the Emerging Leaders Conference for African-American youth while at Transylvania. She is the former program director of the Lilly Project at Transylvania University, a Program for the Theological Exploration of Vocation and director of Financial Aid at Midway College.

Dr. Gillett holds both undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Northern Iowa. She holds an educational specialist degree, Ed.S. and an earned doctorate, Ed.D. from Northern Illinois University. She was a member of the first cohort of leaders in the program Foundations of Christian Leadership with Duke Divinity, in collaboration with the Center for Creative Leadership, a member of the College of Pastoral Leaders Colleague Group, in collaboration with Austin Presbyterian Seminary and a participant in the Kaleidoscope Leadership Institute for Women in Higher Education. She was commissioned as a minister by the Christian Church in Kentucky.

Dr. Gillett is the daughter of Mr. Clayton G. Brown and Ms. Vivian L. Brown, mother to Jeremy, Liyah, Tasia, and Trey, and grandmother to Jayda. She is married to the Reverend Dr. Donald K. Gillett, II, the Senior Pastor of East Second Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Lexington, Ky.



Frost, Professor Thomas Buchanan (1874-1946)

Professor Thomas Buchanan Frost was born on December 18, 1874. He later entered Southern Christian Institute, then known as Mount Beulah, in Edwards, Miss. It was during this time that he became a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and began preaching while attending school. After graduation, he was later called to join the staff of Southern Christian Institute as the Director of work for the Boys. He also became pastor of the church in Edwards, Miss.

Professor Frost was later called by the Christian Women's Board of Missions in 1911 to help pioneer and lay the foundation for Jarvis Christian Institute at Hawkins, Texas. He surveyed the parcel of 40 acres of land, lead work on building dormitory-dining hall-classroom building. The ten room structure was completed and was dedicated at the opening of school the following January. He served as principal of the Institute from January 1913 to May 1914, and later served as the Superintendent of Industries. While he was dedicated to Jarvis Christian College, he never neglected his preaching mission. He left Jarvis in 1922 to build Central Christian Institute in Shepherdville, Ky.; he remained there until the school closed in 1923. He rejoined the staff at Southern Christian Institute and upon retirement, he moved to a farm near Jarvis Christian College. His life was rewarded by the thousands of students who passed through Jarvis Christian College, the students at Southern Christian Institute and a Central Christian Institute.