

Disciples women are invited to share the Good News through:

- ◆ **Worship** for spiritual growth and renewed discipleship;
- ◆ **Bible Study** for greater knowledge, understanding and service;
- ◆ **Issue Study** for action and advocacy;
- ◆ **Mission Study** for knowledge, understanding and acceptance of others;
- ◆ **Service / Action** for hands-on/personal involvement;
- ◆ **Fellowship/Networking** for building a faith community with other women;
- ◆ **Leadership Training** for service to God in the church, the community and the world; and,
- ◆ **Stewardship** of time, talent and resources for the mission of the Church.

Organizing: When a group of Disciples women gathers together it is often referred to as a circle. The image of the circle reminds us of a way of being that is less hierarchical, valuing each woman and inviting all voices to be heard. Traditionally, circles may have been organized around Bible study, quilting, mission emphasis, etc. As Disciples women grow in diversity, we are discovering that women also gather for book studies, life issues, hobbies, concerns, hands-on mission, advocacy, justice issues, societal emphases, and any other common point of connection and excitement. Disciples women continue to gather around any uniting factor that helps them build community and act on their faith.

Stewardship: Women within the DOC give to Disciples Mission Fund (DMF) with over and above gifts for outreach. These gifts to DMF help support Disciples ministry and mission. Also, Disciples women developed the Blessing Box: a spiritual discipline of giving out of

gratitude for God's daily blessings. These offerings are accumulated in paper boxes or zip bags kept close at hand to practice an attitude of thankfulness for all of God's blessings in each moment of the day. These over and above gifts to the whole mission of the church, with a portion supporting Disciples Women's Ministries, help turn hopes into reality.

Mission and Advocacy: As Disciples women seek to understand themselves and their place in the world they have responded to the needs of those around them. Disciples women work together and ecumenically to recognize the needs of others and injustice in our world, and then we seek to develop creative approaches to addressing those needs with compassion and just actions. *DW* has proposed General Assembly resolutions and calls to action for the denomination, so that the Church might recognize the needs of others and respond with gospel boldness.

Just Women Magazine: *Just Women* magazine is a *DW* publication and the official study resource. It was developed by and for Disciples women as a resource providing theme articles inspired by scripture, multi-generational conversations, reflections on healthy living and faith, Bible study, group study guides, and more.

www.discipleswomen.org/just-women-general

Woman-to-Woman Worldwide (W2WW): W2WW offers a life-transforming connection and learning experience. It is sponsored and administered by *DW* in conjunction with Global Ministries. W2WW responds to the call

for women of faith to experience solidarity with one another, to affirm the unity of the church in Jesus Christ and to join the common struggle for justice and peace in the world today. Each year a delegation chosen through an application process that encourages diversity and appropriate preparation visits sisters in other countries to learn from them what it means to be a woman of faith in their context. These international, ecumenical and personal experiences encourage faithful women to see the world through new eyes and bring that perspective back to their congregation and community.

Disciples Women's Endowment Fund (DWEF): DWEF was established in 1990 to provide an opportunity to contribute to a permanent fund that benefits the ministry of women in the DOC. Since 1990, Disciples women and friends have given over \$250,000. With each new dollar, the DWEF value increases, so that the amount earned off the permanent fund increases to provide more financial grants in the present and in the future to encourage women to live out the gospel in creative and empowering ways.

The funds are invested through the Christian Church Foundation to keep pace with inflation and produce a steady stream of income. Only the interest on the investments is used to support grant requests, and first priority is given to ministry which benefits the entire women's network. DWEF funds are a resource to assist women across the life of the church to begin a new and creative ministry that serves recognized needs in their own congregations and communities.

Leader Development: The Leader Apprentice Program (LAP) focuses on equipping Disciples women of color to serve in their home congregations and in regional and general arenas of church life. Many graduates of LAP are now serving at all levels of church leadership. The LAP encourages and strengthens participants: through Bible study and spiritual disciplines, by providing cross-cultural leadership training opportunities, through teaching history and current information on ministries of *DW*, by creating opportunities for participants to become actively involved in resource development and networking events, and by providing history and education on structures of DOC with special emphasis on *DW*.

The annual Disciples Women Leadership Council meetings include *DW* staff persons from each region, *DW* presidents of regions without a staff person, and constituency group leaders to ensure the voices of the wider Disciples Church are heard. These meetings provide opportunities for renewal, networking, professional development, enrichment and support of the members, updates on current resources and objectives, and an advisory and communication channel to share in advocacy for women.

InterRegional Leadership Training takes place within the quadrennium between Quadrennial Assemblies in each of the five Interregional groups. The training provides tools and information to strengthen established leaders while encouraging new leadership among newly involved women and young women.

History: The history of *DW* reaches back to the 19th century. The Christian Woman's Board

of Missions and its successors have organized, educated, and raised funds for missionary ministries and the larger mission of the church. This history includes a sense of calling to participate in God's mission while overcoming obstacles and seeking to deepen the church's sense of compassion and justice ministries through creative approaches as the understanding of women's roles have gone through significant changes in church and society.

Resources: *DW* is committed to providing resources to equip and enable women within the DOC to continue to do ministry, mission, and advocacy in creative and inspiring ways. Regularly published newsletters, *Voices* and *Umoja*, and the *DHM Update* keep subscribers informed about what's happening in Disciples Women's Ministries. These resources, many of which are free, are available on the website at www.DisciplesWomen.org.

To learn more:

Craddock, Fran, Martha Faw, and Nancy Heimer. *In the Fullness of Time: A History of Women in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999.

Lollis, Lorraine. *The Shape of Adam's Rib*. St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1970.

Wisdom of Women, Volume 1 and 2. DVD. Indianapolis: *Just Women* resource produced by IDWM of CC (DOC).

www.DisciplesWomen.org

www.facebook.com/DisciplesWomen

www.facebook.com/JustWomenDW

www.discipleswomen.wordpress.com

[www.twitter.com @discipleswomen](https://www.twitter.com/@discipleswomen)

www.youtube.com/DisciplesWomenDOC

What is a Disciples Woman?



As part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)(DOC), *Disciples Women (DW)* welcomes all to the table as Christ has welcomed us. The ministries of *DW* are part of the movement for wholeness in a fragmented world by:

providing opportunities for spiritual growth, enrichment, education and creative ministries to enable women to develop a sense of personal responsibility for the whole mission of the church of Jesus Christ.

Any woman who participates in any way within the DOC is considered a part of *DW*. We seek to be a network of women committed to the justice-seeking, compassion-focused mission of Jesus Christ with no membership requirement or condition.