

DISCIPLES WOMEN

History Nuggets

By Chesla Nickelson

Disciples Women celebrated Women's History Month by sharing a nugget of Disciples Women's history every day during the month of March. We are sharing these nuggets all in one document for your use. Click on the links where noted to read more information about that particular nugget of information.

1. Disciples Women's Ministries was founded in 1874, known then as the Christian Women's Board of Missions by Caroline Neville Pearre for the purpose of mission work
2. In February of 1876, Dr. and Mrs. W. H. Williams of Missouri became the first missionaries of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions. They were assigned to Jamaica where they were tasked with rekindling the ministry unfortunately abandoned by the American Christian Missionary Society a few years prior.
3. In 1887, Mattie Younkin and the six women in her prayer group formed the National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church for the purpose of meeting the needs of people without homes and children without parents or guardians. Learn more about these seven women and the continued work of the National Benevolent Association by checking out the NBA website.

<https://www.nbacares.org/history>



4. Clara Celestia Hale Babcock was ordained in 1888. The first woman ordained in the Christian Churches, she held pastorates in four churches, conducted numerous evangelistic meetings and personally baptized at least 1,500 people. Rev. Babcock is remembered as intelligent and effective.

NOTE: *There was some hesitation around highlighting Rev. Clara Babcock after learning she participated in the KKK. However, I decided it is important to know our history fully so that we can learn from it. As progressive as we Disciples claim to be, we have to continually check ourselves. We must continue to be vigilant in our pursuit of liberation for all people, even if that means liberation from our history of racism and oppression and liberation from rose colored retrospection of our beloved "movement for wholeness." I pray we learn and grow.*

5. Disciples women participated in the founding of the Christian Women's Temperance Union in 1874. Mrs. Carry Nation and Mrs. Zerelda Wallace are two women who became particularly known for their zeal in the fight against abuse of alcohol everywhere and use of alcohol (wine) as a communion element. From literally praying outside of saloons to making speeches in church protesting communion while communion was being served, these Disciple Women fought fiercely for what they believed in as a result of their faith

6. Sarah Lue Bostick (January 1, 1868 – January 1, 1948) was essentially merger staff before there was even a merger. Rev. Bostick served the Christian Women's Board of Missions and the National Christian Missionary Society by working with African American congregations and she established many CWBM auxiliaries. She was one of the first African American women to be ordained in the Christian Churches and was an early church planter with her husband.



Sarah Lue Bostick

Her collection of mission materials from her over 40 years of service is currently preserved at the Disciples Historical Society. Learn more about her on the Disciples of Christ Historical Society website.

<http://www.discipleshistory.org/history/people/sarah-lue-bostick>

7. In honor of International Women's Day, today's Disciples Women's history nugget celebrates the establishment of Woman to Woman Worldwide.

The Woman to Woman Worldwide program was established in 1987. The purposes of the program was:

- To bring Disciples women in North America into contact [relationship] with women around the world for greater understanding of each other and hearing of concerns.
- To personalize the mission in the life of the congregation, the participants were expected to come back and share their experience with regions and congregations.

Disciples Women, in partnership with Global Ministries continues to lead women on Woman to Woman Worldwide journeys to different countries every year to help establish and maintain cross continental relationships and a more expansive idea of God that can be shared in the local context.

Learn more about Woman to Woman Worldwide and apply for the 2017 journey to India on our website.

<https://www.discipleshomeissions.org/congregations/disciples-women/woman-to-woman-worldwide/>

8. The Ontario Christian Woman's Board of Missions was established in 1887, the same year as the first annual Convention of the Cooperation of Disciples of Christ in Ontario, Canada. The Ontario CWBM immediately began to make a great impact with their foreign mission work, especially in recruiting missionaries

9. Minnie Vautrin, "Goddess of Nanking" was a Disciples missionary and educator in China who is remembered for her impactful and courageous efforts protecting thousands of women and girls during the 1937 Rape of Nanking. Learn more about this Disciples Women by clicking the link.

<http://www.discipleshistory.org/history/people/minnie-vautrin>



Minnie Vautrin

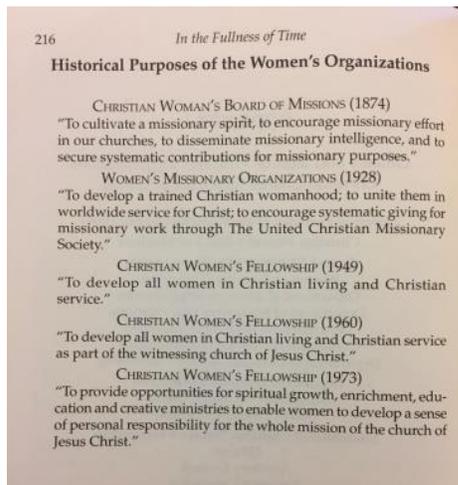
10. The first Quadrennial Assembly was held in 1957, "a major gathering when women - young and old, of many cultures and from many countries - might be called together to worship, study, serve and fellowship."

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11. The current purpose statement of Disciples Women's Ministries is "Disciples Women's Ministries is a conduit for diverse connections empowering each woman to find her voice and live out her call."

Below you can see how the purpose and the name has evolved and what has been constant over the years.



<https://www.facebook.com/DisciplesWomen/photos/a.178564268860638.52783.163635233686875/1413541228696263/?type=3>

12. Janice Newborn was the first African American to serve as executive of a department of DHM. "Janice identified her primary goal as the affirmation of women by encouraging the increased involvement of young women, the development of clergy women and great participation of Hispanic and African American women."



Janice Newborn

<https://www.facebook.com/DisciplesWomen/photos/a.178564268860638.52783.163635233686875/1414761801907539/?type=3>

13. Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins is the first woman to be the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Dr. Watkins' term will come to an end at General Assembly this summer and we will vote on our nominee, Rev. Terri Hord Owens. Rev. Owens could be our first African American General Minister and President. Check out the link to learn more about Rev. Owens.



Rev. Terri Hord Owens

<http://disciples.org/ogmp/meet-the-gmp-nominee/>

14. The Disciples Women's Endowment Fund was established in 1990 to financially support work that benefits women of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Funding is offered for work in the areas of:

1. Leadership Training
2. Scholarship Support
3. Outreach Ministries
4. Faith Development
5. Women's programming

Any Disciples Woman can apply for up to \$5,000. The applications are due annually on March 15 and October 15. Follow the link to the Disciples Women's website to find out how you can contribute to the fund and how you can apply to receive funds.

<https://www.discipleshomeissions.org/congregations/disciples-women/disciples-womens-endowment-fund/>

15. Disciples Women's Ministries (CWF at the time) began implementing a national social action emphasis in 1988. The first emphasis was domestic violence and people were given a list of 50 different ways they could take action around domestic violence.

Currently Disciples Women's Ministries' social action emphasis is, human trafficking "Breaking the Chains: Link by Link."

<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/congregations/disciples-women/human-trafficking-link-by-link/>



16. In 1999, "In the Fullness of Time: A History of Women in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" was published. This book documents the journey and celebrates the contributions of Disciples women in the church and the world. It was written by Fran Craddock, Martha Faw and Nancy Heimer.

You can get a copy of the book from the Disciples Women's Ministries website.

<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/product/in-the-fullness-of-time/>

<https://www.facebook.com/DisciplesWomen/photos/a.178564268860638.52783.163635233686875/1418922048158181/?type=3>



17. In 1949, CWF (Christian Women's Fellowship) was formed by 75 women at Turkey Run, Indiana to unify all the different women's groups.



<https://www.facebook.com/DisciplesWomen/photos/a.178564268860638.52783.163635233686875/1419922104724842/?type=3>

18. Laura Luz A. Bacerra became the first woman of Asian ancestry hired at the general level of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) when she joined the Department of Church Women in 1977. During her trailblazing ministry she was a pastor and one of the founders of NAPAD (North American Pacific Asian Disciples).



Laura Luz A. Bacerra

Learn more of her inspiring story here:

<https://www.disciplehomemissions.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/DW-JW-2010-Summer-LuzBacerra.pdf>

19. The current Disciples Women's Ministries logo was adopted in 1999. The photo below explains the many layers of meaning found in this image that represents Disciples Women's Ministries.

What Our Symbol Means



The foundation for all Disciples Women is our faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Cross is the pivot-point around which all our beliefs and activities revolve.



Our future as Disciples Women is built upon our heritage and the faith and vision of our foremothers. In 1874, Caroline Neville Pearre organized women of the church for mission work, creating the Christian Woman's Board of Missions. Jessie Trout, in 1949, birthed the Christian Women's Fellowship.



Disciples Women are strong. We are strong in our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, our dedication to the church and our relationships with our families and communities. We are strong because of our faith.



The energy-filled arms swinging up in a gleeful arc indicate the joy of being a Christian and a Disciples woman. The joy permeates our lives as we serve our Lord in mission, in our church and in our world community.



Disciples Women embrace others. We are nurturing and all inclusive. We include women of all races and colors, of all nationalities and languages.

Disciples Women encourage all women to serve God's mission in our congregations, our communities and our world.

If you would like more information, please visit our web site at Disciples-Women.org or contact us at:

Disciples Women's Ministries

P. O. Box 1986

(317) 635-3100

Indianapolis, IN 46206-1986

odw@dhm.disciples.org

DisciplesWomen.org



2013

20. For gratitude and giving, Blessing Boxes were created in 1953. An idea of Jessie Trout, the Blessing Box project was designed to help build habits of gratitude and to give to the ministry of the whole church over and above regular offerings.

To learn more about how blessing box offerings have and continue to support the mission of the church click on the link

<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/congregations/disciples-women/blessing-boxes/>



21. In 2016, Lori Tapia became the first woman and the first Mexican National Pastor of Obra Hispana of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

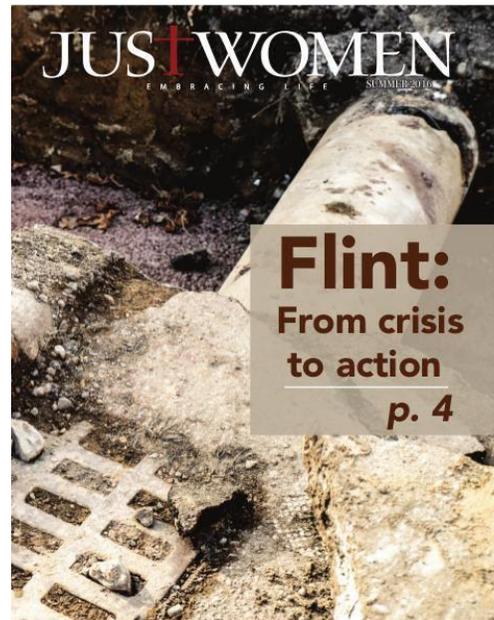
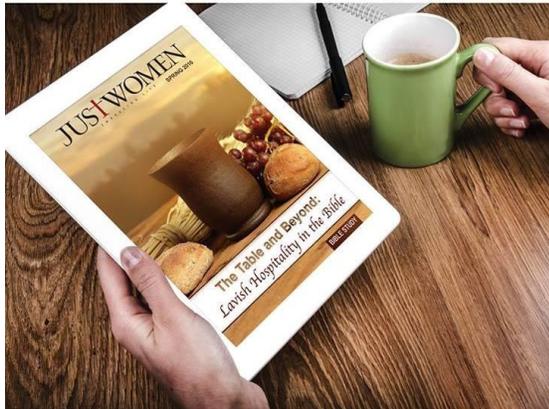


Lori Tapia

22. Sheila Spencer, the Disciples Women’s Program Director at the time, had a vision for a study resource to be written by and for Disciples Women. As a result of lots of fast acting hard work from a team of people, “Just Women” became a publication of IDWM in 2009. “Just Women” is the primary study resource for Disciples Women’s Ministries. It is a quarterly publication which includes a bible study.

You can subscribe on the disciples women's website.

<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/congregations/disciples-women/just-women-magazine/>



23. Rosa Page Welch (1900-1994) was an accomplished mezzo soprano who ministered through word and song around the world. She served in the international, national and local staff of Disciples. She was committed to non-violence and racial reconciliation. Rosa Page Welch was the "ambassador of good will" adamant about living out God's calling for her life.



Rosa Page Welch

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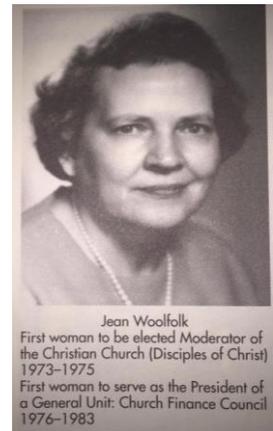
24. In 1996, Hispanic Disciples women formed an official national organization for women, Hispanic and Bilingual Christian Women's Fellowship.



Hispanic and Bilingual CWF Officers, 1998-1999
Seated (left to right): Ellen Frost, Senior Associate, Office of Disciples Women; Arlene Pimentel, President. Standing (left to right): Lydia Velazquez, Adviser; Candida Gonzales, Vice President; Sue Arceo, Past President; Angelica Vilarreal, Treasurer.

<https://www.facebook.com/DisciplesWomen/photos/a.178564268860638.52783.163635233686875/1426989550684764/?type=3>

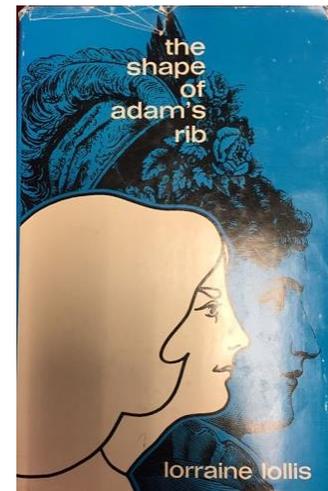
25. Jean Woolfolk was an attorney, a senior Vice President at a major insurance company and a devoted Disciples layperson when she became the first woman to be elected as Moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and also the first woman to serve as the President of a General Unit of the Church.



Jean Woolfolk

<https://www.facebook.com/DisciplesWomen/photos/a.178564268860638.52783.163635233686875/1428019057248480/?type=3>

26. Before “In the Fullness of Time: A History of Women in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), there was “The Shape of Adam’s Rib.” Published in 1970, “The Shape of Adam’s Rib” is a book about the women of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) from 1874 until the time of publication. The author, Lorraine Lollis was adamant about “depicting women not as bystanders but as doers in the church and its mission.



<https://www.facebook.com/DisciplesWomen/photos/a.178564268860638.52783.163635233686875/1428776113839441/?type=3>

27. On opening day of the 1953 International Convention in Portland, Oregon more than 2,000 women gathered and launched the International Christian Women's Fellowship (ICWF).

The purpose of ICWF was "to provide a channel by which all women of the churches of Disciples of Christ in Canada and the United States may be joined in fellowship and in making their contribution to the extension of the Kingdom of God."

28. A recipient of the Liberation Award, former Vice President of the International Christian Women's Fellowship and Vice moderator of Disciples General Assembly in 1969, Sybel Thomas dedicated her life to serving God and serving the church.

Sybel Thomas was also known for the incredible ways she empowered women.

<https://www.facebook.com/DisciplesWomen/photos/a.178564268860638.52783.163635233686875/1430880400295679/?type=3>



Sybel Thomas received the Liberation Award in 1998.

29. Today we honor all the unnamed Disciples Women. The women who worked tirelessly, the women who gave generously, the women who were rejected and ignored, the women who lead without title or recognition. We are grateful for ALL the Disciples women and honor their impactful work in service to God, church, women and the world.
30. On the last day of this year's Women's History month we offer you a benediction. The official benediction of CWBM adopted in 1906 is still used to close many Disciples Women's meetings:

***“God, be merciful unto us and bless us;
and cause your face to shine upon us;
that your way may be known upon the earth,
your saving health among all nations.
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen”***

Click here for the Link to the Disciples Women Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/DisciplesWomen/?ref=nf>