

**Disciples Women's Leadership Council Report**  
**Rev. Dr. Patricia A. Donahoo, Executive Director**  
**January 24-27, 2019**

***Disciples Women's Ministries is a conduit for diverse connections empowering each woman to find her voice and live out her call.*** ***Micah 6:8***

Disciples Women are doing amazing things, as they always have and we have a lot to still do. It is exciting to see and hear all the things that are happening in your regions and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for all you do. I know you are still facing the challenge that some folks are slow to accept and embrace women leaders but that is usually offset by how much we get done in spite of it.

A lot of churches have a 'back to Egypt' committee--A group who doesn't like change or doesn't want change or fears change, and would rather go back to Egypt than be part of what God is doing now.

But that is not how Disciples women work. We/you are constantly moving forward and making things happen. I am honored to get to do this ministry with you.

Activity Report: This year I have worked with women as keynoter, preacher, Bible study leader, pastor, advisor, counselor, and sometimes confessor. I have attended training and rallies like the National Women's March and the Poor People's Campaign. I have participated in a variety of conferences: World Change through Faith and Justice, an international anti-human trafficking meeting in Kupang, Indonesia and in partnership with Global Ministries; the Justice Summit; and, Disciples Public Presence gathering. I serve on the General Ministry Cabinet, the DHM Development and PR Committee, and the Governance Committee of the General Board. I have trained Disciples Peace Fellows and the HOPE Leadership Academy about the ministry of Disciples Women and DHM staff on the use of Expensify. I participated in the Heartland Interregional, IL/Wisconsin Regional Assembly, the Capital Area Regional Assembly, the Great River Region Assembly, Obra Hispana Assembly, National Convocation, and the NAPAD Assembly as well as several regional/local women's events. I attended and had the privilege of participating in the installation service of the new North Carolina Regional Minister, Bishop Valerie Melvin. I met with the Junia group exchanging ideas and finding ways to work together with my counterparts of other denominations. I also attended the Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising training.

UN Commission on the Status of Women: Disciples Women will be participating in the UN's Commission on the Status of Women in 2019. Both the Executive Director and Program Director as well as the IDWM President will be part of the delegation. The main theme is "Social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality."

HerStory Continues Fund: This fund will recognize what women have achieved, what they are achieving, and what they will continue to achieve. This fund will be a legacy fund to endow Disciples Women's Ministries. This fund will support these ministries into the future. Pledge cards are available for named funds and other gifts can be made by check or through the website.

Executive Committee: We celebrate the work of the 2014-2018 Executive Committee who has worked through some difficult times and made difficult decisions surrounded by prayer and offering grace to one another. We celebrate the 2019-21 team who will be groundbreakers serving as the first team with rotating members and changes made in nominating process for some representatives. We appreciate the hard work of all these women leaders.

Disciples Women Mission Project 2019: Shelter Supplies for Women and Children. The mission project is providing supplies for women and children at a variety of shelters. There is often a need for diapers and feminine hygiene products. You can see complete information on your handout.

Blessing Boxes: Blessing box giving is down again, which is very confusing since half of the regions exceeded the previous year's offering (16 regions). However, five regions had more than a 40% drop plus 9 more regions with more than a 15% drop. If you want to know what your region's giving was you can see me and I will show you the history. Please remember that checks sent to Treasury Services must be noted with "Blessing Box" for the funds to be deposited in that fund.

W2WW: This year's Woman-to-Woman Worldwide journey will be to Morocco. Applications for this journey are due by February 15. This gives those attending more time to get their funding together. Next year's journey will be to Indonesia as part of the new Global Ministries initiative focusing on Southern Asia.

145<sup>th</sup> Birthday: We are celebrating the history of women in the Disciples church as well as the history being made today. We will be celebrating the birthday all year long and will be sharing those ideas. We would also love to hear how you plan to celebrate. We are asking 1,450 donors to give gifts of at least \$145 to Disciples Women.

General Assembly 2019: This year's assembly will be in Des Moines and Disciples Women will be actively involved. We are asking that women crochet, knit and/or quilt 3,000 finger labyrinths so we can give them to all worship attendees at GA's opening worship to provide another example of a spiritual discipline. We are also asking that you attach the labels you have been provided, and are on the website, to illustrate for attendees the breadth and width of participation of women in Disciples Women's ministries.

The assembly will be closing early this year so we have moved the women's luncheon from Wednesday to Sunday and we will include a time of praise worship. Make sure you buy your tickets ahead since there will be no time to purchase them onsite.

Sunday afternoon we will be leading a workshop on leadership styles; Monday we will spotlight Disciples Women's Ministries at the DHM booth, and, Tuesday afternoon we will participate in a panel conversation on justice highlighting women's work to fight human trafficking along with other justice ministries.

We have not gotten confirmation yet but our plan is to celebrate our 145<sup>th</sup> birthday during the Monday evening aftersession. We hope to have cake and ice cream and encourage you to bring gifts to celebrate our history and our future.

Our Future: God has been calling women to serve since the beginning of Christ's ministry. The women of the church have been guiding and directing the ministry of Disciples even before they had any recognized or organized power. The women have kept the church focused on mission and care for God's people through their understanding of what it means to be a disciple.

The women of this church have found strength through building relationships and organizing their work across the width and breadth of the church. Our connections are what make us strong and keep us focused on what God is calling us to be and do. These connections have helped us to grow stronger as individuals finding encouragement and support from our sisters. And, together we have done amazing ministry and mission.

Together we will continue to encourage and empower all women to be all that God has created them to be. Working together we will be even stronger in answering our call.