

Disciples Women's Leadership Council Report

Rev. Chesla T. Nickelson, Program Director and Merger Staff

January 24-27, 2019

While the 2018 theme for Disciples Women was "Called for God's Purpose" what comes to mind as I reflect on the year is lyrics of an old hymn, "Time is filled with swift transition, Naught of earth unmoved can stand, build your hopes on things eternal, hold to God's unchanging hand." 2018 was full of changes. We are transitioning into a ministry fully integrating its mission into its daily actions. With change there is always grief, loss and struggle even when it is a good change. When times are difficult we have to remember our purpose, our call and remember to put our hope in things that are eternal. Our journey is not complete and yet as we cling closer to God we get to see glimpses of God's glory.

Just Women Changes



After much prayer and contextual analysis, *Just Women* printed its last issue of the magazine iteration of the publication in Spring 2018. *Just Women* will continue as an annual Bible study and a primary resource for Disciple Women. It will include #DWConnections, the Woman to Woman Worldwide Report and a few other tidbits in addition to the scripture based lessons written by Disciples Women scholars.

Additionally, to be wise stewards of time and finances, the Just Women Editorial team will now meet via multiple video calls throughout the year instead of traveling to meet in person.

Just Women 2020

Theme: Health and Wholeness

Confirmed writers:

- Rita Nakashima Brock, Board member of Soul Repair Center at Brite
- Karen Thomas Smith, President of the Evangelical Protestant Church in Morocco
- Rev. Shannon Dycus, Disciples Minister and spiritual director, currently serving Mennonite Church in Indianapolis, serves on General Board, and wrote a Bible study to be released in June 2019 by Herald Press

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)



Note: Please use official updated order forms if not ordering online. The Bible study is \$15 each and if you do not pre-order by Dec 1, shipping is an additional \$2.89 per copy.

*Time is filled with swift transition,
Naught of earth unmoved can stand,
build your hopes on things eternal,
hold to God's unchanging hand*

#DWConnect Newsletter

As we continue to maintain and build connections, we are now planning to send a SHORT newsletter via email and social media each month. You should have already received the January 2019 newsletter. This will be used to highlight different Disciples Women's ministries, upcoming events and to share inspiration and information pertinent to Disciples Women.

If you have something you want included in the newsletter, please email Ministry Associate, Lisa Hubbard. lhubbard@disciples.dhm.org.

Biennial Session: Women make changes

The convocation women had a dynamic standing room only luncheon that included dancing, a dramatic presentation of the gospel and the commissioning of new officers. The women used their meeting time to make hygiene kits to be distributed to local women in Hoover, Alabama, choosing to forego the normal meeting format. They are changing from "what is always done" to "what is God calling us to that works best now." The clergy



women were inspired by Rev. Yolanda Norton at the Clergy Women's Breakfast and Rev. Shannon Walker Dycus closed the session with a charge to honor what was, recognize what is and move forward in more relevant and effective ways to serve God and serve the people of the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

*Trust in Him who will not leave you,
Whatsoever years may bring,
If by earthly friends forsaken
Still more closely to Him cling.*

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)





Fighting for Social Change

On behalf of Disciples I participated in various rallies and protest. I met with politicians and signed petitions. We continue to fight for the rights of women, black women in particular and for immigrants. Fighting for just treatment of immigrants is connected to our continued fight against human trafficking.

*Covet not this world's vain riches
That so rapidly decay,
Seek to gain the heav'nly treasures,
They will never pass away.*

Building Relationships



I continue to work on building relationships with National Convocation constituents and especially with the conventions. This year I paid a visit to churches new to me in Tennessee, Maryland, Arizona, California and Virginia. Additionally, while attending various Disciples Women's events, retreats, WWOW and Heartland interregionals, ordinations and other celebrations. I hosted or made a special effort to connect with the African American women and with leaders who are connected to African American Disciples. This allowed me to connect with African American pastors and their congregations. I also attended the 136th Piedmont District Convention as a participant. I hope to participate in more conventions in 2019.

*When your journey is completed,
If to God you have been true,
Fair and bright the home in glory
Your enraptured soul will view.*

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)



LAP change

The Leader Appreciate Program also has seen some changes. With the group from IL/WI. I integrated the Enneagram test into the weekend of training which made a powerful and revelatory impact on the participants. I was delighted this group was mostly women who I did not know, who are active and hold leadership roles in their local churches but largely disconnected from the regional and general church. It was a beautiful experience getting to know these women and helping them get connected to the other two expressions of the church. I am encouraged as I am in conversation with the women of Southern California and Indiana about 2019 LAP opportunities.



*Hold to God's unchanging hand,
Hold to God's unchanging hand;
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God's unchanging hand.*

Woman to Woman Worldwide

2018 – Cuba

A journey to a country in the midst of changing their constitution while having unstable relationship with the US turned out to be an eye opening experience for the participants. Many learned, for the first time about Cuba and Cubans from Cubans. We traversed much of the country meeting many partners, engaging projects and having conversations about faith and life in Cuba with all kinds of Christians.



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)





You can read reflections on the Cuba journey in the 2019 *Just Women* Bible study and on the Global Ministries page [here](#).

Additionally, [here](#) you can learn more about the special projects the women chose, a resolution, supporting the seminary in Matanzas and supporting the entrepreneurial women's projects of the MLK Center in Havana, Cuba

2019– Morocco * will be led by Pat Donahoo

2020 – Southern Asia * will be led by Pat Donahoo

*Hold to God's unchanging hand,
Hold to God's unchanging hand;
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God's unchanging hand.*

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)



Special Projects

Wisdom of Women



Disciples Women received a grant to create more Wisdom of Women Resources. I have spent quality time with Rev. Dr. Delores Carpenter who will be sharing her story and wisdom in the project. To save on cost, I have taken on the task of learning how to record and create video. I hope to release the project before General Assembly 2019.

Our Whole Lives Training

DHM and Disciples Women have been in discussion about Disciples becoming official partners with the UCC and the UU in their Our Whole Lives sexuality and faith training program. As an initial step, I completed one of the trainings and already have tons of ideas related to how to adapt the program for Convocation congregations as we seek to help our churches have a healthy understanding of and relationship with sex, sexuality, sexual identity and faith. This will also aid in developing the comprehensive leadership program for youth.

The Young Women's Project

We are excited about the opportunity to help young women develop spiritually through a program that includes lessons regarding financial health, body agency and autonomy, sexuality and spirituality, Disciples and Disciples Women 101 and of course, call and vocation discernment. We want to help young women know God and themselves intimately in ways that help them make wise choices. If you are interested in this kind of program with the young women in your region, please contact, Disciples Women Program Director, Chesla Nickelson cnickelson@dhm.disciples.org

*Hold to God's unchanging hand,
Hold to God's unchanging hand;
Build your hopes on things eternal,
Hold to God's unchanging hand.*

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)

