

**Disciples Women's Leadership Council Report**  
**Rev. Dr. Patricia A. Donahoo, Executive Director**  
**January 30, 2021**

***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 staff are amazing people doing a great job. We have two half time support staff doing a great deal to meet the needs of the women of the US and Canada. Since we cannot have full coverage, we appreciate your patience in getting questions answered. This past 11 months has brought with it some real challenges and it has also brought some real opportunities. Before we stopped traveling and since, by way of online communication, my ministry has included keynoting, preaching, teaching, advocating, advising, listening, comforting, building relationships, collaborating with other general ministries, and facilitating trainings. We know you have had some struggles in your regions and congregations and hope that you, too, have found new opportunities to try new ways of doing things as well as new and creative ministries. Your dedication and creativity is what lifts up the ministry of Disciples Women and the ongoing reputation for the work of women throughout out the Church. We stand with you and appreciate you in the work.

I serve on the General Ministry Cabinet, the DHM Development and PR Committee, and the Governance Committee of the General Board. As part of serving on the Covenant Education Task Force of the General Board, I have written a Bible study and have done editing on the educational materials being developed around covenant. I have trained Disciples Peace Fellows and other general ministry partners about the ministry of Disciples Women. I participate in interregional gatherings, regional assemblies, women's retreats, worship and other events as requested. I also facilitated training for NBA conveners on Appreciative Inquiry. I have had the opportunity to participate in and attend a number of events that would not have been possible if I had needed to travel to each location. Given the increase in online gatherings, I have had the opportunity to participate in three events on the same weekend located in separate interregional areas.

Executive Committee: We celebrate the 2021-23 team and its newest members. Wanona Rogers-Redd has begun her time as president during very challenging times and I encourage you all to give her your support. Not only are we facing multiple pandemics but she is also leading the ministry through calling both program staff. We appreciate the hard work of all these women leaders. (List provided in PowerPoint presentation.)

Disciples Women Service Project 2021: Feeding the Hungry

*Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'* Matt 25:37-40

Disciples Women's service project for 2021 is an opportunity to meet the needs of people who are experiencing food insecurity. While food insecurity is a reality every day it has become a wider and broader issue during the COVID-19 pandemic. The service project for 2021 will be to work in our communities to address these needs.

Hopefully, you will be able to identify opportunities and/or organizations in your local areas. You are encouraged to offer support in your communities and around the world. As always, we encourage you to contact directly organizations in your area to find out what their specific needs are as well as to begin building a relationship.

Also, please share with the Disciples Women office what you are doing so we can celebrate together. If you have stories or pictures to share on social media, please use #DWConnect. Of course, as always, we want to be careful not to exploit or to have the appearance of exploiting the people we are hoping to assist.

Suggestions:

Community food banks  
Church food banks  
Gleaners Food Bank

If you need help finding a local food bank you can use the tool on the Feeding America website:

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank>

Disciples Women's Endowment Fund: Due dates are March 15 and October 15. The committee receives many more requests than there are funds to cover so be sure to include all necessary information. These are grants given for new and creative ministries by and for Disciples Women. While some projects were not able to be completed others made creative decisions to carry on their work in new and unexpected ways.

HerStory Continues Fund: This fund was established in 2019 and has now received sufficient contributions to open the fund. This fund recognizes what women have achieved, what they are achieving, and what they will continue to achieve. This is a legacy fund to endow Disciples Women's Ministries. This fund will support these ministries into the future. These funds will be invested with Christian Church Foundation in the Bostick Select Fund that is committed to invest free of human trafficking, fossil fuels, weapons manufacturers, and companies targeted for divestment because of their involvement in perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. (This fund was named to honor Sara Lue Bostick one of the first African American women to be ordained in the Disciples of Christ and who worked tirelessly to further the mission of the Christian Women's Board of Missions.)

W2WW: Both journeys scheduled for 2020 and 2021 have been cancelled due to the COVID pandemic. We do not want to risk the health of our delegation or risk carrying disease to the women we learn from in other locations.

Blessing Boxes and Giving: Blessing box giving has plunged with donations down by 55% from last year. Additionally, DMF giving is down and has had a serious effect on the financial situation of the ministry.

General Assembly 2021: This year's assembly has been cancelled so we will continue to find ways to continue to build relationships and collaborations via digital tools.

Our Future: Women continue to build relationships, negotiate collaborations, and lead and inspire ministry throughout the Church. Each woman's call inspires and empowers her in unique and personal ways. Historically, women have kept the Church focused on mission and justice; women continue to do this work.

We continue to discern what God is calling us to do and be in this time and in the future. We have a unique opportunity now to structure and direct women's ministries during this time of searching for new leadership and molding how Disciples Women will serve God and the God's mission into the future. There is a lot of change coming and change allows for innovation; with your support of our leaders we can be even more effective and faithful as we move forward. Please pray for your leaders as they face a changing world and are running to keep up. Pray for wisdom, patience, and their ability to recognize how grateful we all are for their leadership.

We had already planned to meet virtually this year because of expenses so we were not surprised by the change like some others have been. This is a financially responsible way to meet. We also realize the value of networking face to face and having those opportunities to build personal relationships and look forward to a time when we can meet physically together at least on some modified schedule.

We are always more effective and stronger when we work together toward the goals of God's mission to which we have been called. We will continue to amaze ourselves and others by what we are able to accomplish when we combine our strength, experience, and resources.

I have spent more than half of my ordained life in this ministry and am blessed to have had the opportunity to be called to and serve in what I consider to be my 'dream job'. God has blessed me beyond my wildest imagination with the ministry and with the relationships I have enjoyed. I am grateful to God and to all of you who have encouraged and supported me along the way.