Greetings:

Things have been different this season, in that we’ve had to do things we’ve never had to do. Yet what remains the same is this reason: The Church and love of Christ will always come through. This season we’ve been reminded that the Church is not confined to the four walls of a physical place. We, the people, are the church and bring light of Christ into every space. Living in the midst of multiple pandemics has brought challenges and opportunities. It has called us to be creative, intentional and appreciate new forms of community. It has always been an opportunity to connect us with life changing love of God. This is the year that has prepared us for the waiting during this Advent Season.

Blessed to be a blessing to you,

Rev. Sheila P. Spencer
DHM Interim President

Dear Church,

What a gift it is to be walking through these uncertain times with you. I have been inspired by the ways you are rising to the challenge and imagining new ways of being church.

This difficult season holds an invitation for us: an invitation to imagine how we can bear witness to God’s limitless love. You may already have a copy of my Advent devotional, Imagining a New World, in which I reflect on imagining with courage. I’m also sharing some of those thoughts in my weekly video messages on social media. I hope you’ll join me in these reflections.

As we look to the next year, there’s no doubt the challenges will remain. But so too will the invitation. As a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, we are called to imagine a church that bears witness to God’s limitless love.

I’m glad to be imagining with you.

Rev. Terri Hord Owens
General Minister and President

How the Church Emerged Through the Year

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Have you considered making a gift to
Disciples Home Missions
for Christ

in your will?
If so, please contact
Disciples Home Missions
DHM Equipping Disciples for Christ
Worship Map Online

Disciples Home Missions provides an online worship map linking you to virtual worship services that congregations across the denomination are making available online. This dynamic map can be found at: https://www.wellfed-spirit.org/virtualworship/index.html

By clicking on one of the country graphics at the location above, and then clicking on a particular state or province, you will find links provided by congregations in those locations who are streaming virtual worship services for any who would like to join them.

New Devotional Connects Disciples in a New Vision for the Church in 2021

Wellsprings of Hope: Prayers for a Prophetic New Vision for Disciples, is a collection of 52 weekly reflections on Isaiah 35, the hallowed passage about finding new life, new faith, and new prophetic vision in challenging places and spaces. This new devotional, available at ChalicePress.com, will walk you and your congregation alongside other Disciples congregations toward a new vision for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Written by leaders of the Disciples general ministries and edited by Old Testament scholar The Rev. Rick Lowery (with a foreword by The Rev. Terri Hord Owens), Wellsprings of Hope speaks of finding water in the desert, strength and transformation through our faith, and the journey God calls us to undertake as we see a new way of being Disciples.

Participating general ministries include:
- Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries
- Chalice Press
- Christian Church Foundation
- Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministries
- Disciples Center for Public Witness
- Disciples Church Extension Fund
- Disciples Home Missions
- Disciples Men
- Disciples of Christ Historical Society
- Disciples Women
- Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries
- Higher Education and Leadership Ministries
- National Benevolent Association
- National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- North American Pacific/Asian Disciples
- Office of the General Minister and President
- Pension Fund of the Christian Church
- Reconciliation Ministry
- Week of Compassion
In October 2019, Countryside Christian Church in Winchester, Indiana, created a committee to consider new ministries or possible ways to expand existing ministries to help with deepening or developing faith. Linda Brown, Vice Chair of the Board, led the group to discover what our church offered, what it needed, what it could accomplish, and how those ideas supported the faith formation of both our members and the community. The group ultimately focused on two possible projects: expanding our “Messy Church” program, to reach children in our community, and also creating a permanent prayer labyrinth on our church property. Once COVID-19 surfaced, our efforts became focused on the labyrinth. The Rev. Warren Lynn helped us journey from a place of “could we?” to a definite “we can!” by helping us imagine a labyrinth made from affordable materials. As a community partner, Ohio Valley Gas (OVG) Corporation dug a 50-foot foundation circle in our yard, donated gravel, and moved heavy construction materials. With two Saturday workshops, the congregation members, Scouts, Scout leaders, and OVG volunteers, came together to build the labyrinth. Our labyrinth was dedicated on October 18, 2020! Folks are already using the labyrinth as a spiritual tool.

Now another journey continues—incorporating the labyrinth into our lives and making it a part of our on-going faith practices. A monthly labyrinth group is available on our Facebook page facebook.com/groups/3438624112880046 and we’ve begun monthly in-person meetings this November. Plans are formulating to use the labyrinth during Advent season, Blue Christmas service, Christmas Eve service, Lent, and more.

Perhaps, the real labyrinth walk is similar to the journey of the wise men...

---

**Children Worship & Wonder are doing Trainings Virtually**

If you are interested in your church learning more about CW&W or need new storytellers please contact:

Wilma Shuffitt at:
Disciples Home Missions (DHM)
email: wshuffitt@dhm.disciples.org
Phone: 317-713-2639

Or Reverend Lisa Engelken at:
Email: lengelken@dhm.disciples.org
Phone: 913-634-5602
Chaplain’s Feature

In late September, the Disciples Chaplains held their first virtual retreat. The keynote speaker was Rev. Jonathan Fisher who is not only a US Army Chaplain but also an ACPE Chaplain. In appreciation, Disciples Chaplains Association made a donation to Luvability Ministries, an organization that is dear to Jonathan’s heart. Luvability shared the following on their Facebook page.

A very special ‘Thank You’!

We received a gift made in the name of our friend, Chaplain (Major) Jonathan R. Fisher, D.Min, ACPE CE from the Disciples Home Mission.

The gift of $250 has been put into a new fund in honor of his mom, Marlene Fisher, that will be used for special projects that encourage the spiritual lives of those we serve. The fund is called “The Marlene Lennox Fisher Fund.” The Disciples Home Missions gift has been matched and the good people of St. John’s United Church of Christ in Niles, Michigan, have given $100 toward the fund. That brings the fund to $600 already, and we hope to expand it greatly over the course of the coming year to do great work for the reign of God among those with disabilities.

Thank you, Chaplain Fisher, for being a true friend of those with disabilities. We pray for continued blessings upon your work for the reign of God as a Chaplain in the United States military.

Disciples and COVID-19-19

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has compiled a collection of resources and statements for pastors and congregations in response to the COVID-19-19 pandemic. We are updating this page with more resources as available. Many of the resources are from the ministries of Disciples Home Missions.
DISCIPLES MISSION FUND

Contributions from congregations like yours make this ministry possible.

Thank you!

FOR MORE INFO VISIT DISCIPLESMISSIONFUND.ORG
Disciples Peace Fellowship Accepting Applications for 2021 Peace Interns!

Spend Summer 2021 as an Ambassador for Peace!

Disciples Peace Fellowship is now accepting applications for our 2021 Peace Interns! This 12-week, paid internship allows young adults to live out the Gospel imperative for peace and justice. The 2021 Peace Internship will be a hybrid model that will allow our Peace Interns to work with camps and conferences, partner with Disciples Justice ministries, and team up with ecumenical and interfaith peace movements all while advocating for peace for justice in the world.

The Peace Intern Program has been life changing for so many over the years, and DPF is looking forward to working with another amazing cohort of young adults this summer.

Information about this transformative summer internship, the application process and all online application materials can be found at DisciplesPeace.org/Apply.

All applications and references must be completed and submitted by January 31, 2021.

If you have any questions about the internship or the application process, please do not hesitate to contact DPF’s Mission Director, Rev. Brian Frederick-Gray, at MissionDirector@DisciplesPeace.org.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

~ John 14:27 ~

National Benevolent Association

of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

A general ministry of the Disciples church, the nonprofit National Benevolent Association (NBA) collaborates with leaders and with health and social service organizations to strengthen and transform communities through compassion, healing, and justice.

The NBA provides education, companionship, inspiration, and resources for organizational and leadership development for health and social service ministries. All of our work with partners is grounded in our historic mission of justice and advocacy.

Connect with NBA and learn how we can partner with you!

www.NBAcares.org   ·   314.993.9000
What is Alex?

You know we have a DOC yearbook, but did you know we are moving some of that data online AND collecting all 2020 data online?

Meet Alex: Data for Disciples! This free tool for all congregations is being implemented right now. You can capture your weekly attendance and giving data to see trends.

From January through March 15, you will be able to enter all your other yearbook data through the same simple dashboard.

You learn more about the project here and find a video tour of the congregational dashboard.

https://disciples.org/alex

Make sure your congregation is signed in. There will not be paper options for yearbook reporting this year.
The Work of Leadership Development and Supporting Higher Education Continues

Like other General Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (HELM) has had to adjust to the safety constraints demanded by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the work of leadership development and supporting Disciples-related institutions of higher learning continues, one significant change involved many of the annual gatherings supported by HELM moving to online formats.

The Leadership Fellows Program annual retreat, held during the first weekend of November, was initially scheduled to take place in Indianapolis. Instead, the 2020 retreat was held virtually as the 34 Fellows of this year’s cohort shared their talents, dreams, struggles, and hopes for the future. Sara Wilson, a first year Leadership Fellow, shared the following about the impact of this year’s retreat:

“As a new member in the HELM Leadership Fellows Program, I was excited to experience the retreat for the first time. Even though the retreat could not be done in person this year, it was a very meaningful weekend that went beyond my expectations. HELM was able to create a space for all of the members to feel connected and open to each other. I was able to meet all of the members virtually and it felt as if I had known them my whole life. Through-out the retreat weekend, we were privileged to hear from The Rev. Terri Hord Owens, The Rev. Lee Hull Moses, The Rev. Darnell Fennell, and The Rev. Chris Dorsey. It was wonderful to hear from these four speakers and I learned so much about Disciples history, the current state of the Disciples church, different outreach opportunities through the National Benevolent Association (NBA), and about the importance of generosity. I am so honored to be a part of this program and look forward to spending the next four years as part of it!”

Other virtual gatherings that recently took place include a meeting of the Association of Disciples for Theological Discussion (ADTD) in October and, due to the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature moving online, a time for Disciples scholars to connect with one another as well as hear updates from Brad Lyons, President and Publisher at the Christian Board of Publication/Chalice Press, and The Rev. Chris Dorsey, President of HELM.

While we look forward with hope to a time when we can again meet together in person, we give thanks for the ability to connect with colleagues and continue in the important work of leadership development and supporting Disciples higher education.

Application Period for Scholarships Opening January 1!

HELM is excited to announce that the application period for students to apply for the Leadership Fellows Program, PhD Scholarships and Seminarians Grants will run from January 1 to March 31, 2021. For more information on the application process and eligibility requirements, please visit the HELM website at www.helmdisciples.org or contact Jon Barnes at jbarnes@helmdisciples.org.
Three NCM Initiatives Inspire, Excite

2020 presented unprecedented challenges, but New Church Ministry (NCM) was there to support Disciples in innovative ways.

**Prospering through prayer**

Prioritizing the spiritual discipline of prayer, NCM launched Water the Plants to support new congregations and their leaders. Every week, intercessors gather on the phone to “water” DOC church “plants” with prayer. Guided by 1 Corinthians 3:6, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow,” the ministry aims to garner 1,000 intercessors. (Join here.)

**Forging a fearless future**

In August, NCM convened a New Church Summit with Disciples Church Extension Fund to strategize the New Church Movement’s future. This virtual, three-day event included nearly 90 general and regional ministers, seminary leaders, and representatives from various church planting initiatives.

General Minister and President Terri Hord Owens opened the summit by urging the Church to re-imagine itself, saying “Now is the time to pivot and evolve.” Mark DeYmaz, author of DISRUPTION: Repurposing the Church to Redeem the Community, served as keynote speaker. Following two days of presentations and workshops, NCM formed eight tactical teams to implement the strategies developed by participants.

**There’s a hack for that**

NCM continued its webinar series New Church Hacks with a second season, bringing experts together to help participants create and continue community connections from their couch, manage change like a champ, and address systemic racism. It also introduced a new feature: a Facebook Live Q&A. Watch out for season three, and all that NCM has to offer, in 2021!

---

**DHM Student Scholarship Program**

*Application form deadline: March 15
Reference and transcript deadline: April 15*

Scholarships are made possible by gifts from individuals, families, congregations, and other expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Scholarship funds are generated from interest earned on permanent funds and cash gifts and are used as investments in persons preparing for ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Go to the following link for more information:

All Peoples Community Center Provides Essential Services to South Los Angeles Vernon-Central

All Peoples Community Center (All Peoples) provides social and educational services in South Los Angeles—where 33% of families have income below the federal poverty level. Services are intentionally designed to address poverty and educational needs. We were deemed by the City of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti as an “essential services provider” during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In October 2020, Marcelio and Silva walked through our doors seeking help for themselves and their four school aged children. Mr. Marcelio is a day labor worker, and found himself unable to obtain any employment due to COVID-19. As a day labor worker, he doesn’t qualify for unemployment. The family took the little savings that they had and began to invest. Every morning, they wake up early in order to make tamales to sell on the streets. Even though their hard work of selling tamales does provide some income, it is not enough to support the family of six. All Peoples was able to provide Marcelio and Silva with a grocery gift card, and staff are working with them to secure housing assistance.

Through the support of the Pacific Southwest Region Disciples of Christ and National Benevolent Association, All Peoples has been able to provide supplemental groceries and grocery gift cards to many community members like Marcelio and Silva who are desperately in need of help during this unprecedented time. In addition, the Disciples Homes Mission is currently providing relief through the “No Underserving Children Fund” to families who may not qualify for city-funded services.

All Peoples is grateful for the support of the Pacific Southwest Region Disciples of Christ, National Benevolent Association, and the Disciples Home Mission as we continue our mission to provide real solutions, real heart, and real service to South Los Angeles.

Saundra Bryant, Executive Director:
All Peoples Community Center
Los Angeles, California
213-747-6357 ext. 111,
sbryant@allpeoplescc.org

Christmount Supports Community Effort to Feed 300+ for Thanksgiving

In late April, Christmount made the difficult decision to cancel all summer camps and Christmount-sponsored summer programs. This in turn resulted in Christmount not being able to hire nearly 50 summer staff for camping programs and food-service positions, and subsequently led to the closure of the Christmount Food Services department for the bulk of the year.

Rather than look at our situation in terms of what we could not do, we decided to view our situation as an opportunity to do things we have never been able to do before. We reached out to other local nonprofit organizations to offer them the use of our kitchen and dining hall.

Bounty & Soul—a community-based nonprofit providing access to fresh produce and wellness education for everyone—has used the Christmount kitchen and dining hall to store and package healthy food boxes for the community all year long.

Food Connection—an organization committed to rescuing fresh meals to ease hunger and reduce food waste—also found a welcome home in the Christmount kitchen this year. When Thanksgiving rolled around, Food Connection teamed up with Chef Shawn from the University of North Carolina at Asheville to prepare Thanksgiving meals to be delivered...
Dear 2020 Asylum Seekers Christmas Card Project Participants,

Thank you so much for your contribution to the Christmas Card Project for Asylum Seekers at the Eloy Detention Center in Eloy, Arizona! Our personal Arizona based “card gatherer,” Karen Kohl, who has been deeply involved with asylum seekers for several years wants us to know that the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project (based in Tucson) annually seeks to distribute a hope-filled handwritten Christmas card to each of 5000 detainees at the Eloy Center.

Thanks to a number of Disciples youth groups and congregants Karen and her friend, Selena Seesecker, was able to collect almost 900 cards for detained asylum seekers. Each of your cards included handwritten cheerful, caring and hopeful messages (written in the detainees’ native language) which we feel sure will lift the spirits of these asylum seeking detainees as they await their court dates which determine their fate.

In case you didn’t know, the asylum seeking process is one which is totally legal, however, at this time it is sadly backed up and families must often wait for many months to learn whether they will be released into the care of family already living in the USA or be deported back to the countries from which they once fled, fearing the loss of their life and limb.

We hope that there will be fewer asylum seeker being detained next year, but whatever the numbers of detainees, we expect to run this project again next year. So…we invite you and your friends to save the fronts of this year’s Christmas cards so that we can send them out to asylum seeking detainees in the same manner again next year.

If you have any questions about this project or the work of volunteers such as Karen Kohl and other volunteers involved with the Florence Project please contact me at kepperly@dhm.disciples.org.

Yours In Restless Peace,

Rev. Kate Epperly, Minister of Justice and Advocacy for Families and Children, DHM Ministries Across Generations Team

Selena Seesecker & Karen Kohl
10 Bethany College Students Awarded DOC Scholarships

Ten Bethany College students are recipients of the Disciples Appalachian Scholarship, a ministry of the Disciples Home Ministries.

- Noah Gill, Beach City, Ohio
- Emma Gress, Cambridge, Ohio
- Aubree Gray, Moundsville, W.Va.
- Anna Heller, Shadyside, Ohio
- Olivia Zinn, Philippi, W.Va.
- Marci Mazza Fredley, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Madison Dressel, Connellsville, Pa.
- Alexia Valenzuela, Eight Four, Pa.
- Daniel Blum, Wheeling, W.Va.

Each student receives $3,000 toward tuition at Bethany College. To be eligible, the students must be members of a Disciples of Christ congregation, must reside in an Appalachian county, and belong to a cohort that will help them advance their leadership skills and think deeply about Appalachia.

Bethany College has a longstanding history with the Christian Church. Alexander Campbell, one of the principal founders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), founded Bethany College in 1840 and was its first president.

Bethany College reinstates Church Relations Committee

Bethany College recently revived its Church Relations Committee as part of its efforts to strengthen the ties between the campus and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Church Relations Committee comprises six members of the Board of Trustees: the Rev. Thaddaeus Allen, the Rev. Dr. Arthur Keys, the Rev. Dr. Janet Long, the Rev. Fred Harris, Mr. Marc Chernenko, and Mr. Ken Bado.

Alexander Campbell, one of the principal founders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), founded Bethany College in 1840 and was its first president.

“If it wasn’t for the Disciples, there would be no Bethany College,” Reverend Allen said.

The primary goals of the committee are to attract students to Bethany College and protect Disciples of Christ landmarks associated with the college.

The nearby Campbell Mansion was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1970 and registered as a National Historic Landmark in 1994. The Disciples of Christ Historical Society opened on the grounds of Campbell Mansion in 2016.

The committee will focus its attention on applying for grant money and attracting new donors to maintain the Campbell Mansion.

“It’s like any historic building,” Allen said. “It will take all the attention you can give it.”

Bethany also owns the Campbell Baptismal Site and God’s Acre Cemetery, the final resting place for Campbell and many of his family. Another property, the Historic and Sacred Brush Run Church site in Washington County, Pa., recently underwent extensive landscaping work.
**Do GREAT, while doing GOOD.**

You can, by investing with Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF)!

For more than 137 years, Disciples have helped Disciples by partnering with us. Funds invested with DCEF support the ministries and missions of congregations in need with timely loans. In return, we have paid our investors competitive rates on a variety of vehicles, including Demand Plus Notes, Traditional and Roth IRAs, and Educational Growth Notes. **But, right now, the rate is even better!**

**2.0%**

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For more information, call 800. 274.1883 or visit disciplescef.org. **Disciples helping Disciples . . . and themselves**, through DCEF. Invest in your values today, and you’ll **do great while doing good.**

This is not an offer to sell our securities to you and we are not soliciting you to buy our securities. We will offer and sell our securities only in states where authorized. The offering is made solely by our Offering Circular, which you should read carefully before making your investment decision. Like mutual funds or stocks, our securities are not insured by the FDIC or any other government agency. Rates may change without notice. Consult your tax advisor. An investment involves certain risks and a risk of loss as more fully disclosed in the Offering Circular.
Informing, Connecting, and Empowering Disciples and Other People of Faith for Ecumenical and Interfaith Justice Advocacy in the United States and Canada.
Incarnation

“Incarnation” is the way in which the majority of Christians think about, talk about, and live in response to the Biblical truth that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” Therefore, most Christians view Christmas as a time to affirm that it was not only in the death of Jesus but also in the birth of Jesus that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Godself.”

But “incarnation” is a concept that might also, in a different but related sense, be applied ecclesiologically: the Church is the Body of Christ in which the crucified and risen Jesus is still very much alive and present to believers. This is especially true when we gather together at the Lord’s Table, remembering Christ’s suffering and death, communing with one another in Christian unity, and anticipating the eschatological banquet to which all people are invited.

There is still another way in which we may speak of an “incarnation,” and that is presented to us in Matthew 25. Jesus here reveals to the nations that he is present in “the least of these” who, according to the prophets, suffer due to injustice and oppression. Thus, he calls all of us to respond to anyone suffering or in need and to do so by means of personal engagement, solidarity, and justice advocacy. When we do, we partially “incarnate” the love of God that is revealed in its fullness in and by the entire life of the One whose birth we celebrate every Christmas.

Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston, Executive Director, Disciples Center for Public Witness and Director, Disciples Justice Action Network (DJAN).
How to Stay Connected with DHM

**DHM App**
1. Search Church App - tithe.ly
2. Download and add in the name Disciples Home Missions
3. Click OK to change the logo

**Follow on Facebook**
https://www.facebook.com/discipleshomemissions/

**Stay connected on Twitter**
https://twitter.com/DHMDisciples

Congregational Resources available from Disciples Home Missions at:
discipleshomemissions.org/about-us/resources

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FIND COMMON GROUND AND HEAL A BROKEN NATION

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MARK FELDMAN

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— Walter Brueggemann

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— Peter Marty, from the foreword

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PIECE MINTS

**Imagining A New World**
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**Low**
AN HONEST ADVENT DEVOTIONAL
JOHN FREDERICK

**You Can't Ask That!**
EDITED BY CHRISTIAN FATT

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Order Now at ChalicePress.com

You Want to Change the World. So Do We.
In December 2019, Lexington Theological Seminary (LTS) received a $1 million grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. to participate in the Thriving Congregations Initiative. This grant will help congregations develop their own senses of who they are in their particular contexts. Twenty-three congregations were selected from four Disciples Regions to participate.

The objectives of the Thriving Congregations Project are to identify the congregations’ mission and vision; to understand the roles of the pastor and of an empowered laity; and to develop new tools for measuring success. Simultaneously, the project seeks new ways to develop the accountable ministry curriculum at LTS by observing these congregations. All LTS M.Div. students must have an accountable ministry site in which to work. The learnings from the Thriving Congregations Project will enhance this part of the Seminary’s program.

LTS named Rev. Erin Cash as Project Director. Rev. Cash previously served as Director of Admissions at LTS for more than eight years. A two-term Moderator for the Christian Church In Kentucky and a Doctor of Ministry student at LTS, Rev. Cash brings a passion for the local church to this role. She began working with the 23 congregations in May.

“Our purpose is to take churches already thriving or on the cusp of thriving and put them into conversation with each other to facilitate reflection and exploration,” she said.

“To have something that was put on paper and now to see how it impacts congregations is a real deep joy,” add LTS President Dr. Charisse L. Gillett.

Is “listening and learning” in danger of becoming the new “thoughts and prayers”? A twenty-year-old – which is the age group we need to hear, especially these days – told me she thinks it is, especially for white people.

Just like some respond to tragedy with the promise of thoughts and prayers, her concern is that too many are responding to these days by offering to listen and learn.

Recall the story in Matthew 21: A father asks his two sons to go to work. One says no but changes his mind and works. The other says yes but doesn’t do anything.

Jesus then asks, “Which son did the will of his father?”

Not a very hard question, is it? Not a hard question for us, not for them. The one who said no but went to work – he acted.

Fine story. No big deal.

But Jesus doesn’t end with the story. Instead, he says that overly and overtly religious people remind him of the second brother. They are ones who say the right things, stand for the right things, maybe even believe the right things, but do not do the things that God asks.

Jesus is not the only one to suggest this idea. Buddhism has similar teachings. Confucius understood kindness to be of more importance than purity of thought or ritual.

I’ll stay in my lane. Being a Christian is more about how we live than the dogma we hold. It’s less a set of beliefs than a way of life.

Confusing beliefs for actions, convictions for obedience, happens. For instance, we believe and say that we love our families yet sometimes give them far too little time and thought. We believe and say we are against violence yet sometimes buy violent video games for our children or support other violent activities. We believe in the United States’ form of democracy yet sometimes don’t vote. We believe in God’s creation yet sometimes don’t reduce, reuse, and recycle – much less challenge the systems that produce so much waste.

It’s easy to confuse beliefs for actions. But that doesn’t make it excusable.

Beliefs mean little, if anything at all, apart from what we do about them. There’s not a creed or dogma or belief in the world that is

See Wilson on Page 19.
Everyone Got It

Everyone got it. Except for the 18-month-old, grandparents, parents, and siblings contracted COVID-19. I imagine the story is similar for many who live in communities of poverty. On the reservation the impact of COVID-19 has a particular twist in the lives of two cultural populations.

For some Yakama people, intergenerational contraction of COVID-19 is attributed in part to Disciples Boarding School history. Our particular denomination’s history of separating Yakama children from their parents created and imbedded a historical trauma of extraction. To offset this fear of separation many families live generationally; by either having multiple generations living in one household; or having generational gatherings each week.

Isolating in the time of COVID-19 sounds clinically correct to the White systemic ear. However, people who have experienced systemic separation and the genocide of familial relationship, identity, and lifeways do not experience isolation as healing. Rather, having the government telling elders to isolate from children and grandchildren sounds a lot more like death than life for these families.

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Everyone got it. From youngest to oldest, COVID-19 ran through the family. Uniquely affecting reservation farmworkers, COVID-19 heightens two realities in the lives of undocumented farmworkers: fear of poverty and fear of detention/deportation.

Poverty lends to single home generational living. In addition, poverty means adults have to work when work is available, COVID-19 or not. So when COVID-19 comes along and farming is designated an “essential,” farmworkers work (i.e., fields, orchards, hops, packing plants, meat processing facilities). When a farmworker contracts COVID-19 under a single home framework, there simply is no place to isolate. Which in turn leads to COVID-19’s rapid infection of the entire family. And yet, this is not a farmworker elders greatest fear.

Certainly, we all carry some degree of fear of dying. In this time of COVID-19 and inadequate border policy, though, this fear is amplified for farmworker elders. Remembering the farmworker background story of enduring a journey to free their family from intolerable conditions found in the landscape of their birth; we begin to understand their greatest fear is not located in dying. What horrifies them is their sickness will place them within a US institution—the hospital—who will learn of their lack of documentation and as a matter of policy, notify the authorities; which, will cause a cascade effect leading to the detention and deportation of their family. Is it surprising that many farmworker elders do not enter the health care system in a timely manner—if at all?

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Disciples of Christ have at least one takeaway from the COVID-19 situation on the reservation. If we recognize and own our history of participating within the US structure of systemic racism which has contributed to COVID-19’s spread among Indigenous families; then, we can reorient ourselves and our structure to prioritize the wellbeing of farmworker elders and their families over governmental policies of detention and deportation. Done well, we will minimize the historical trauma of COVID-19 upon farmworker and Indigenous families.

David B Bell
Minister for Indigenous Justice
Center for Indigenous Ministries (DOC)
Jarvis Christian College Receives Endowment from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.®

Jarvis Christian College has received an initial endowment of $50,000 from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® in partnership with the AKA Educational Advancement Foundation®. The donation comes on the heels of the sorority’s recent third annual HBCU Impact Day initiative where more than $1.5 million was raised in one day for the support of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Last year, AKA began the process of donating to HBCUs through the AKA-HBCU Endowment Fund with the goal to donate $10 million within four years. The sorority gifted $1.6 million to the first 32 of 96 HBCUs at a ceremony held at AKA’s International headquarters in Chicago. Each HBCU received $50,000 in unrestricted endowment funds as part of a phased approach to help schools reduce student debt through scholarships, fund industry-specific research, recruit and retain top faculty, and other critical operations.

“Given the current economic state of our world, in which we are dealing with a global health pandemic and widespread injustice against people of color, now more than ever is the time for historically Black sororities, fraternities and other HBCU supporters to step up and be of service to our historic institutions of higher education,” said Dr. Glenda Glover, AKA International President and Chief Executive Officer. “I know first-hand the immense challenges HBCUs are facing during this time of uncertainty,” added Dr. Glover, who is also the president of Tennessee State University and an HBCU graduate. “However, I also know that these institutions are resilient and resourceful, which is why Alpha Kappa Alpha is fully committed to investing in our HBCUs and preserving their educational legacy for generations to come.”

While HBCUs have gotten much more favorable attention in the press over the past few months, COVID-19 continues to have an adverse effect on most colleges and universities. “Many HBCUs have adjusted to the challenges of educating through a global health pandemic, but financial support is still needed to help maintain daily operations and to give our students the support they need to successfully complete their collegiate journey at Jarvis,” said Dr. Eke, V.P. for Institutional Advancement and Development.

Dr. Newman stated that “with the AKA-HBCU Endowment Fund, Jarvis Christian

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worth one visit to a sick friend, or one ice chip on the lips of someone in the hospital, or one pair of flip flops for a child with no shoes. Or one action that challenges racial injustice.

I can hear what you’re thinking, which is scary for us both: Listening and learning, or let’s say having a book study and discussion, is doing something. Education is an action. It’s not nothing.

I agree. It is something. For many, it’s a good starting place and for all, it’s good to continue to learn and grow. There are excellent study-worthy books written by authors of color.

But if that is all one does, then it’s not much more than nothing. It’s certainly not as active as contacting a mayor to request the establishment of a civilian-led board to review police use of force policy and the cases where police use excessive force. It’s not reminding a city council member that budgets are moral documents, and so a city’s budget should reflect commitments to all the community. It’s not donating money or voting.

Listening and learning, much like thoughts and prayers, needs to be followed by actions for change.

By the way, what prompted the story in Matthew 21 was a question from some closest to Jesus. They asked, “Who are you?”

It’s as though Jesus was saying that who he was, and who we are, is determined by our actions.

Nathan Wilson is director of communications at Christian Theological Seminary. Read his blog at www.nathandaywilson.com or follow him on Twitter.com@nathandaywilson
Jarvis Student Participates in Women Summit

VIRTUAL – The FORTUNE Most Powerful Women Next Gen Summit held its virtual symposium on October 13-14, 2020 in collaboration with the Clinton Foundation to bring together preeminent rising women in business along with select leaders in government, philanthropy, education, sports and the arts. The moderator for this event was Chelsea Clinton, Vice-Chair of the Clinton Foundation, who echoed the purpose of the Summit was hearing from women that are changing the world.

Jarvis Christian College freshman Joslyn Prince was selected by the Clinton Foundation to participate in the panel discussion on combating vaccine hesitancy and public health misinformation. According to Megan Strawther, Senior Manager for Community Engagement at the Clinton Foundation, Vice Chair Clinton’s team was excited about Jarvis Christian’s “COVID-19-19 Is Color Blind” Student Action Fund project for the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U), and they felt Joslyn would be an excellent female student to include on the panel since the Jarvis initiative helps communities of color combat false narratives around public health.

Dr. Newman stated “As a freshman, student athlete and advocate for her generation, Miss Joclyn Prince is well on her way to preeminence. Her presentation was so touching and thought provoking. If you have not watched her video about the impact of COVID-19-19 on all of us, I strongly encourage you to do so.”

As a CGI U student Commitment Maker, the Jarvis public awareness campaign “Your Life Matters! COVID-19-19 Is Color-Blind: Protect Yourself and Others” targets young people of color who are more likely to risk exposure to COVID-19-19 and most likely to have little knowledge about the pandemic. Many do not believe the dangers of COVID-19-19 are real. Participating on the FORTUNE panel was one important way Joslyn was able to spread the message those most susceptible to being exposed to the Novel Coronavirus are the same target audience who are most likely to share false narratives about vaccine hesitancy. The second important point of access to our target audience is Joslyn’s social media YouTube video: https://youtu.be/4fwvvrpM3qM

If you would like to know more about the Jarvis CGI U Student Action Fund, you may contact Mr. Chestley Talley, Director of Career Services at ctaley@jarvis.edu or by phone at (903) 730-4890 ext. 2127 or at (804) 721-7755.

About Jarvis Christian College: Jarvis Christian College is a historically Black liberal arts, four- year institution affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The mission of the college is to prepare a diverse population of lifelong learners intellectually, socially, spiritually, and personally by providing interactive services and using varied modalities of instructional delivery. Find out more at www.jarvis.edu.
SWGSM Adjusts Ministries in 2020

This is a year in which every single person is impacted by a pandemic that none of us anticipated. Sadly, that crisis has created division. We lean on the Jesus appeal from John 17:20-22, an appeal that we all may be one.

It is through that oneness that we have altered our ministries in 2020. Sadly, border closings prevent some of the work we have carried out for decades, like serving orphans at Casa Bethel in Mexico. Yet we have helped even more asylum-seekers this year—persons released from detention centers because Immigration & Customs Enforcement had to conform to social distancing requirements. The Lord has carried us through in miraculous ways, despite hardships faced by our corps of supporters. As we minister to dozens of asylum seekers each month, our prayers and precautions have kept us safe from a COVID-19 outbreak.

Food needs for that constituency and for others who are food insecure are being met in part through a new partnership with Farmers to Families. Other churches join in to provide food on a weekly basis to those who need it most.

In the spirit of the Thanksgiving and Advent seasons, local businesses go the extra mile. The Original Willie’s Bar-B-Q in Alamo, Texas, is donating 150 plates to the ministry to feed many who would not otherwise have a Thanksgiving dinner.

We are one in Christ Jesus. Praying with you, Church!

In His Service,

Feliberto Pereira
Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries
Los Fresnos Texas

Christmount Continued from Page 10.

to folks in need in the community.

Christmount eagerly opened our kitchen to help support this initiative and the community stepped up to help provide the food and supplies to feed over 300 families in our community! Rather than fixating on how to get more people to Christmount this year, we flipped the script and looked for ways that we could simply get Christmount into the community. What we discovered surprised even ourselves.

Perhaps what is more important than trying to figure out how to get our neighbors into our churches, is trying to figure out how to get our churches out to our neighbors. Sometimes we are at our best when we see organizations who are serving our communities and we find ways to come alongside them to support the work they are already doing.

Maybe that’s why you can’t spell “community” without unity.

Rev. Rob Morris, Executive Director
Christmount
Black Mountain, North Carolina
College will be able to assist more students in their quest to complete all requirements for the bachelor’s degree. Eighty-one percent of our students are Pell-Eligible and some are first generation college students. It is our goal to provide them the appropriate pathway through what we have entitled The Jarvis Promise. The Endowment helps us fulfill our Promise of providing an affordable college education within an academically challenging, but supportive learning environment.”

Although HBCU Impact Day has passed, Alpha Kappa Alpha is still accepting donations to support the AKA-HBCU Endowment Fund $10 million dollar goal. Interested donors can make contributions by texting AKAHBCU to 44321, giving by mail or online at https://donate.akaeaf.org/pages/HBCU_Community_Impact_Day. For more information on the AKA Educational Advancement Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, and the sorority’s commitment to HBCUs and the endowment fund visit www.AKAEAF.org.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
from the staff of Disciples Home Missions