



2023-2024 Cabinet Members

Etta Harris,
President

Dr. Christy Marrs-Scruggs,
Vice President

Evelyn Harris,
Secretary

Pamela Segrest,
Director of Communications

Kieya Griffith,
Director of Legislation

Elder Lillie Wiggins,
Director of Study & Service

Leah White,
Director of Worship

Rev. Dr. Debra Reid,
Immediate Past President

Tramaine Robinson
Middle Area Coordinator

Denise Smith
Anne Marie Farmer
District III Liaisons

Barbara Bekaert
Ramona Halburnt
District IV Liaisons

Lori Franklin
West Area Coordinator

Rev. Laverne Jackson
District V Liaison

Brenda Crawford
District VI Liaison

Jeannie Cleveland
Ginger Quarry
District VIII Liaisons

Tennessee Disciples Women's Ministries (TDWM) Newsletter

Winter 2024

TDWM President's Message

Greetings,
Tennessee Disciples Women's Ministries (TDWM)

It is with great pleasure that I serve as your TDWM President. This year, 2024, TDWM Cabinet is planning many opportunities for your participation. All cabinet members are working hard to guarantee that planned programs meet high expectations.

This spring's Spiritual Journeys are projected to increase in participation. During July 2023 TDWM Cabinet meeting, Rev. Dr. Debra Reid, past TDWM President, announced that she would serve as the Resource Leader for all three regions. This gesture was made in the form of gratitude for funds contributed to Dr. Reid's summer mission trips on behalf of Disciples Women. Each Spiritual Journey will include young people from Youth Departments within the church. They will perform in the areas of singing, dancing, the spoken word, greeters, story-telling, etc. Area Coordinators are working with District Liaisons to update contact information for assigned Disciples Christian Churches. Through this line of communication, women from multiple churches will attend Spiritual Journeys to interact with other women ministries.

This fall's Fall Retreat will be an in-person weekend retreat during the month of September. Those who attended 2023 Fall Retreat completed the evaluation and selected the location. The location will afford Tennessee women opportunities to network in attaining strategies on how to improve and elevate local women ministries. This event will include young adults to introduce them to the work of Disciples Women's Ministries. Their youthfulness will bring elevated flavor for future involvement.

Regional Assembly will take place October 11-12, 2024, in Memphis, TN. TDWM will plan an awesome lunch with an amazing program. Our mission is to be 100 Strong Women serving Almighty God. Newly selected cabinet members will be introduced and commissioned to serve for two years.

Area Service Projects were chosen during the Fall Retreat for the duration of two years. It is the responsibility of every Disciples woman to work cohesively with their area coordinator to ensure the effectiveness of this ministry. Our mission is to improve and soften the lives of those in need, especially homeless women, and children. Disciples Women, your participation, involvement, and voice are greatly needed to move these ministries in the direction of God's guidance upon our lives. Please get involved and stay involved.

Etta Harris
TDWM President



A Royal Affair: Tennessee Disciples Women's Fall Retreat



Over 45 women from Disciples of Christ churches across Tennessee gathered for a day of spiritual nourishment and sisterhood at the Tennessee Disciples Women's Fall Retreat on September 23, 2023. Hosted at Bethany Hills Camp & Conference Center, where women were treated to an inspirational message centered around the theme "We are Royalty as Daughters of God."

Reverend Kim Murray, co-founder of Anointed Temple of Praise Christian Church (DOC) in Memphis, TN powerfully gave a message titled Let's Live with Purpose by Making Change from Ester 2:7-17. Rev. Murray's message revolved around the 3 points of: decision, deliverance, and divine power. At the closing of her message, Rev. Murray reminded us to not let satan rob us of our gifts and that God's power can renew our life so that we can walk in victory! Hallelujah!

In addition to anointed preaching, attendees enjoyed fellowship with sisters from across the state during lunch, had the choice of a book study led by Elder Lilly Wiggins of Alameda Christian Church (DOC) of Nashville, TN, and 2 arts and craft sessions where ladies decorated Blessing Jars or made their own unique pieces of jewelry. The silent auction for baskets from each region went for top dollar and the items from SERV (set up and displayed by Debra Goodnight from Collierville, TN) were a hit. Area meetings were also held, where officers were elected as area coordinators and district liaisons.

Tennessee Disciples Women President, Etta Harris of Memphis, TN expressed joy over the spirit-filled retreat and the number of Disciple Women that join together.

Mark your calendars for next year's Fall Retreat, tentatively scheduled for September 21, 2024, and Spiritual Journey events throughout the Lenten season in each region. When women of faith come together, God displays His glory in our midst!

Dr. Christy N. Scruggs
New Covenant Christian Church (DOC), Nashville, TN
Vice-President Tennessee Disciple Women's Ministry



Middle Area Spiritual Journey

Lunch and learn. Live to Serve...

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45

On January 10, 2024, Lillie Wiggins of Alameda Christian Church and myself had the great pleasure to visit Safe Haven family Center for a lunch and learn. It was not only informational but a joyous occasion fostering new friendly connections.

Within the lunch and learn we engaged over a meal learning about the history of Safe Haven and all that they offer the community, the number of families, children they have assisted and housing placements in 2023 leading them up to their 40th Anniversary this year. We are grateful to be able to serve such an organization that gives heart and soul to everyone they service.

In addition to our donations they always embrace volunteers. After the lunch and learn I graciously accepted an invitation to go back and do so with Alex Furr (Volunteer and Community Engagement Manager) for a game night with kids. It was a memorable and energetic time! I am definitely looking forward to going back, and I encourage everyone to volunteer when the opportunity arises. Blessings, Honor, and Glory to God for all the greater things to come in 2024 in serving for God's glory!

For more information on how to get involved in volunteer opportunities please visit: <https://safehaven.org/volunteer/>

Tramaine Robinson
TN Disciples Women Middle Area Coordinator
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TN DISCIPLES WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY 2024



SAVE

• THE •

DATE

APRIL 27, 2024

NASHVILLE, TN



MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON.



West Area Spiritual Journey

Empowering Women to Transform their lives! "Cultivating a Community of Compassion."

As a Disciple of Christ and a part of the Tennessee Disciples Women's Ministry, I found myself at the Fall Retreat on September 23, 2023. I felt both renewed and a keen sense of empowerment as I accepted the challenge to become the West Area Coordinator. Along with District Liaisons: Laverne Jackson, Brenda Crawford, Ginger Quarry, and Jeannie Cleveland, we forged ahead and began our first project to close 2023 which was the "Christmas Love Project" for HER Faith Ministries.

Phase One of our 2024 service project was started with Room in the Inn. We arranged a tour at the new Room in the Inn facility in December of 2023 which is our new Service Project for the next 2 years. The facility coordinator Terry Dulany allowed us to tour the facility which is located at 409 Ayers Street. They provide an on-site facility for families sheltering onsite and a recuperative care program.

As we embark on our Spiritual Journey 2024 It is my prayer and heartfelt desire that we are able to revive the spirit of the youth in our churches and create a more inclusive and welcoming environment ready to bloom with fresh ideas and opening the door for our youth to become a part of the Tennessee Disciples Women's Ministry. At the heart of "Cultivating a Community of Compassion" is our Love for Jesus Christ and our love for one another. I hope that you will attend our Spiritual Journey 2024. Expect a Transformative and Extraordinary Experience!

TENNESSEE DISCIPLES WOMEN'S MINISTRY

WESTERN AREA 2024 SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

MARCH 16TH
9:30 AM - 1:30 PM

NEW DIRECTION CHRISTIAN CHURCH
6120 WINCHESTER ROAD
MEMPHIS, TN 38115



Kennadee Carlton



TICKETS FOR EVENT
\$35.00
LUNCH INCLUDED

RESERVATIONS DUE
MARCH 4, 2024

REGISTRATION FORM
ATTACHED

PLEASE CONTACT

LORIFRANKLIN
PHONE (901) 409-5244
OR EMAIL
loriafranklin@gmail.com

PROVERBS 31:25-26



Rev. Dr. Debra Reid
Anointed Temple of Praise

Study & Serve



Elder Lillie Wiggins
Study & Serve Director

Books are our gateway and companion to the bible as we make our journey to deeper knowledge and discovery, insight, spiritual development and sometimes needed healing. We hope you find the following book recommendations a sacred blessing for use in your individual and group study.

Bible Study

Leading Wherever You Are: 7 Weeks in the Book of Joshua, by Teresa Swanstrom Anderson

Saying Yes in the Darkness: 7 Weeks in the Book of Psalms, by Teresa Swanstrom Anderson

First Corinthians: Living Love When We Disagree, by Melissa Spoelstra

Ruth: God's Amazing Love For You: An In-depth Bible Study by, Courtney Joseph

Prayer

Your Journey to a Prayerful Life, by Barbara Schutt

The Power of Praying Through Fear, by Stormie Omartian

Mental Health, Loss, and Grief

Living with Loss, by Dan Moseley

Grieving with Hope: Finding Comfort as You Journey through Loss, by Samuel J. Hodges IV

It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand by Megan Devine

Shattered: Surviving the Loss of a Child by Gary Roe

Diversity and Justice Issues

God Loves Justice: A User-Friendly Guide to Biblical Justice and Righteousness by, Jessica Nicholas

The ABCs of Diversity: Helping Kid's (and Ourselves!) Embrace Our Differences, by Carolyn B. Helsel & Y. Joy Harris-Smith

The *ABCs of Diversity* includes specific resources and activities to use with both young and older children to encourage compassion and empathy.

The Blessing Box

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

– *Thessalonians 5:16-18*

"God, I am grateful and pray that someone may also be blessed."

For those who participate, contributing to the Blessing Box becomes more than a habit or financial obligation. Instead, it becomes a spiritual discipline that helps keep a focus on gratitude to God and the responsibility to share blessings with others. The amount deposited may be a few dimes, a couple of quarters, or spare dollars found in a coat pocket. The amount is not nearly as significant as the discipline of regularly remembering God's goodness through the acts of dropping in coins and praying prayers of thanksgiving. We praise God for this opportunity to count our Blessings and to be a Blessing to so many families and missions (at home and abroad). It is truly a Blessing to inspire, nurture, and empower the human spirit. I pray in Jesus Name that we (as women of God) continue to be a Blessing as we continually and whole-heartedly meet the needs of individuals near and far. I pray that God will open our hearts even more in 2024 as we continue to bridge the gap by remembering that we are Blessed to be a Blessing!!!



Sincerely,
Minister Mary Shotwell
Director of Stewardship

Disciples Women's Leadership Council

Disciples Women's Leadership Council (DWLC) hosted their annual meeting January 17-21, 2004, at the Hyatt Place in Indianapolis, IN. As your president, I had the privilege of attending.

Rev. Dr. Christal Williams encouraged those attending to expand our understanding of the importance of ministry that is vital, timely, and revolutionary. She gifted each attendee with the book: *In the Fullness of Time: A History of Women in the Christian Church* (DOC). **Claudette President** reminded Disciples Women of the Leadership Apprentice Program (LAP) that is available for African American women to receive training designed to assist women in building ministries. **Rev. Angele Saunders Johnson** shared that in 2024, Disciples Women will host Women's Action Web (WAW), a domestic focused mission experience whereby a group of women will travel to learn about specific justice issues affecting women. She further shared the continued collaboration with Global Ministries, CUIM and DHM around the Thursdays in Black Campaign, which urges members of the faith community to wear black on Thursdays to bring awareness of gender-based violence. **Rev. Monique Crain Spells**, Director of Christian Education MAP, Vice President and Founder, preached a prophetic word from Proverbs 14 and 15. The sermon was centered around Mary and Jesus being commercial advertisement. Her most profound statement was, "People of **Faith** are different from people of **Belief**." The conference was informative and thought provoking. I have lots to share in 2024.

Etta Harris
TDWM President

Legislation

Navigating the Waves of Change: Key Policy and Law Reforms of 2023 US Government that Shaped our Current Future.
By: Kieya Griffith, Director of Legislation, TDWM

Happy 2024 Christian Church.

We have said farewell to 2023, a year that brought significant shifts and transformations on both the national and global stages, it is crucial to reflect on the major policy and law changes that have shaped the ever-evolving landscape of the United States. Six legislative areas were center stage in 2023 and continue to be pivotal as we navigate the currents of change for the 2024 election year. This insightful review explores the key policy and law reforms that will undoubtedly shape our path forward in the coming year.

Climate Action and Environmental Policies:

One of the most noteworthy changes in the 2023 US government revolves around climate action and environmental sustainability. Recognizing the urgency of addressing climate change, a comprehensive set of policies was introduced to accelerate the transition to renewable energy, promote sustainable practices, and rejoin international agreements dedicated to combating climate change.

The government's commitment to environmental stewardship is evident in its ambitious targets for reducing carbon emissions, investing in clean energy research and infrastructure, and fostering partnerships with the private sector to drive innovation in green technologies. Acknowledging the urgency of climate change, the 2023 government prioritized comprehensive climate action policies. The administration reestablished the United States' commitment to the Paris Agreement, setting ambitious targets for carbon emissions reduction¹. This marked a significant shift towards renewable energy and sustainable practices, reflecting a commitment to environmental stewardship.

Healthcare Reforms:

In response to lessons learned from the global pandemic, the US government undertook substantial healthcare reforms to enhance accessibility, affordability, and quality of services. Legislative changes focused on expanding healthcare access and addressing healthcare disparities². These reforms signal a commitment to building a more resilient and accessible healthcare system.

Social Justice and Equity:

The 2023 government placed a strong emphasis on social justice and equity, enacting legislation addressing systemic inequalities. Measures included criminal justice reform, police accountability, and initiatives to promote equal opportunities in education and employment³. These reforms aim to create a more inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Technology and Cybersecurity:

Recognizing the centrality of technology in modern life, the government introduced policies to protect digital infrastructure and citizens' privacy. Comprehensive cybersecurity measures were implemented to mitigate cyber threats and ensure the resilience of critical systems⁴. These changes balance technological advancement with national security concerns.

Reproductive Rights and Healthcare:

In a move to "protect reproductive rights", the 2023 government enacted laws safeguarding women's access to comprehensive healthcare, emphasizing reproductive autonomy and access to family planning services⁵. These measures aim to destigmatize reproductive healthcare and ensure equitable access to resources. Yet at the same time, the Supreme Court overturned its landmark 1973 decision of *Roe vs. Wade*. The right of a woman to choose her destiny was compromised prompting legislative responses at both the federal and state levels. Essentially, this leaves the decisions of a woman's reproductive decisions and consequences to individual state legislative interpretation. This move overshadowed previous changes that made a significant step forward in upholding reproductive rights as a fundamental aspect of individual freedom and bodily autonomy.

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The Promotion of LGBTQ+ Rights and Same-Sex Marriages:

Meanwhile, further steps towards LGBTQ+ equality were made as the government enacted legislation strengthening protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity⁶. Legal barriers to same-sex marriages were addressed, ensuring equal rights and protections for LGBTQ+ individuals⁷.

Ideally, these few 2023 US government policy and law changes signify a commitment to address critical issues that impact the building of a more equitable, sustainable, and inclusive future. Yet, some policies still lead us to question if equality and diversity will ever exist for all. It is crucial to remain engaged in the democratic process and unravel the intricacies of the significant shifts occurring within the government corridors. May this insightful journey transform and inspire advocates within our community to uphold the dignity and rights of all of our citizens.

Footnotes

- The White House. "Fact Sheet: President Biden Sets 2030 Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Target Aimed at Creating Good-Paying Union Jobs and Securing U.S. Leadership on Clean Energy Technologies." (Accessed on January 9, 2024) ↵
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. "HHS Announces Actions to Expand Access to COVID-19 Boosters and Improve Health Equity." (Accessed on January 9, 2024) ↵
- The White House. "Fact Sheet: Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Actions to Build Black Wealth and Narrow the Racial Wealth Gap." (Accessed on January 9, 2024) ↵
- The White House. "Fact Sheet: Biden Administration Advances Key Recommendations to Improve Cybersecurity Across Critical Infrastructure." (Accessed on January 9, 2024) ↵
- Planned Parenthood. "Key Reproductive Health and Rights Accomplishments in the First Year of the Biden-Harris Administration." (Accessed on January 9, 2024) ↵
- Human Rights Campaign. "HRC Celebrates House Passage of LGBTQ+ Non-Discrimination Legislation." (Accessed on January 9, 2024) ↵

Upcoming Events

March 16, 2024	Tennessee West Area Spiritual Journey New Direction Christian Church Memphis, TN
April 27, 2024	Tennessee Middle Area Spiritual Journey Alameda Christian Church Nashville, TN
April 28-May 3, 2024	Women's Action Web (WAW) Tucson, Arizona
June 2024	National Ministry of Hispanic and Bilingual Women DOC
July 11-14, 2024	National Convocation /Biennial Session Greensboro, NC Theme: "We Belong Together"
September 2024	Tennessee Disciples Women Fall Retreat TBD
October 11-12, 2024	Tennessee Regional Assembly Memphis, TN
July 2025	Disciples of Christ Christians Churches General Assembly