



Tennessee Disciples Women's Ministries (TDWM) Newsletter

Fall 2024

2022-2024 Cabinet Members

Etta Harris,
TDWM President

Dr. Christy Marrs-Scruggs,
Vice President

Evelyn Harris,
Secretary

Pamela Segrest,
Director of Communication

Kieya Griffith,
Director of Legislation

Mary Shotwell
Director of Stewardship

Elder Lillie Wiggins,
Director of Study & Service

Vacant
Director of Worship

Area Coordinators
Vacant
East Area Coordinator

Tramaine Robinson
Middle Area Coordinator

Lori Franklin
West Area Coordinator

District Liaisons
Anne Marie Farmer
Barbara Bekaert
Ramona Halburnt
Leverne Jackson
Ginger Quarry
Brenda Crawford
Jeannie Cleveland

Rev. Dr. Debra Reid,
Immediate Past President



TDWM President's Message

Disciples Women's Leadership Council (DWLC)

Attended the DWLC Conference in Indianapolis, IN, January 17-21, 2024, and participated in the amendments recommended for International Discipleship Women Ministries (IDWM) Rules of Procedure. The conference addressed best practices for Disciples Women, The Spirit of Generosity, and reports were presented by the officers.

28th Biennial Session National Convocation

Attended and gained valuable information. The theme was "We Belong Together". It took place in Greensboro, North Carolina July 11-14, 2024.

Cabinet Meetings

Annual TDWM Cabinet meetings were conducted during the months of February and July with special call meetings as needed. The agenda items included: Reports of Directors, Area Coordinators, and District Liaisons; Fall Retreat updates by Vice President; Nominating Committee chair was announced; 2025 General Assembly updates; and detailed reports of TDWM Financial ledgers.

West Area Informational Tea Party

Tennessee Disciples Women's Ministry President hosted a High Tea Party in her home for West Area Disciples Women Leaders to provide a networking session for newly selected/elected leaders. The leaders introduced themselves and shared information about their expectations of their position.

Blessing Box Funds and Calendar

Tawanna Ferguson publishes monthly calendars that are distributed to TDWM Cabinet members and the District Liaisons send them to their assigned church contacts. Also, it is placed on TDWM website.

2024 Regional Assembly

The Regional Assembly flyer is being distributed via email communication. TDWM Cabinet members have taken on the responsibility of providing continental breakfast at the Regional Assembly on Saturday morning, October 12th.

Fall Retreats

2024 Fall Retreat was integrated into 2024 Regional Assembly. Our resource leader was Rev. Tara Faith Williams, M.Div, Senior Pastor of New Covenant Christian Church, Nashville, TN.

2025 Fall Retreat will take place at Pickwick Landing State Park, 120 Playground Loop, Counce, TN on September 19-20, 2025. The contract has been signed and the deposit has been made.

West Area Service Project - Room in the Inn

Disciples Women donated 50 bus passes to *Room in the Inn* to assist homeless women and children with summer transportation.

Meetings with Disciples Women groups/circles leaders are being planned. Groups/Circles will be paired with a hosting church and commit to two nights a month of service. The women will meet at the assigned church and assist with serving meals Friday night and/or Saturday morning. The women groups will be encouraged to donate items needed for the homeless population.

Etta Harris
TDWM President

Celebrating 150 Years of Disciples of Christ Women



Disciples Women's Ministries is currently celebrating its 150th anniversary, marking a long history of women within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) dedicated to service, advocacy, and living out their faith through various ministries, with roots tracing back to the mid-19th century where women began organizing to address the needs within their communities and church, often facing challenges and limitations in leadership roles at the time; this milestone is a recognition of the impactful work done by generations of Disciples.

Years	Era	Major Accomplishments
1874-1919	The Venturing	The establishment of Jarvis Christina Institute in 1911 under leadership of Bertha Mason Fuller (white) and Sarah Lue Bostick (black).
1920-1949	The Unifying	The name 'Christian Women's Fellowship' CWF was chosen.
1950-1968	The Resurgent	Quadrennial Assembly, International Christian Women's Fellowship, Disciples of Christ, Purdue University, Lafayette Indiana, June 19-23, 1957
1968-1973	The Self-realization	Christian Woman's Board of Missions celebrated 100 th Anniversary at General Assembly under the leadership of Caroline Neville Pearre of Iowa City, Iowa.
1974-1982	The Advocacy	First woman, Jean Woolfolk, elected Moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) 1973-1975.
1983-1987	The Empowerment	Restructuring of International Christian Women Fellowship.
1988-1992	The Solidarity	First Woman to Woman Worldwide Program launched and Office of Disciples Women established.
1993-1998	The Reassessment	Disciples of Christ begin to recognize the growing leadership among Hispanic women.
1999-	Beyond	First person of color and second woman to lead our denomination, General Minister and President of Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Rev. Dr. Teresa Hord Owens.

A New Experience at Regional Assembly



Dear Sisters in Christ,

We're thrilled to announce an exciting change for our annual Fall Retreat! This year, we're embarking on a unique experience by combining with the Regional Assembly in Memphis, TN, on October 11-12, 2024. This new format offers unparalleled opportunities for broader fellowship, diverse perspectives, and efficient use of our time.

Fall Retreat Highlights

Friday, October 11

Pray in Color Cafe: Explore creative prayer techniques
Labyrinth Prayer Walk: Experience walking meditation

Saturday, October 12

Morning Watch Meditation: Start your day centered in spirit
Women's Luncheon: Share a meal and strengthen bonds
Resource Workshop with Rev. Tara Faith Williams from New Covenant Christian Church, Nashville

While the setting is different, we're maintaining our core elements:

Intimate spaces for sharing and support
Personal spiritual growth opportunities
Ongoing ministries engagement
Joy, laughter, and sisterhood

This new format is an exciting way to grow and adapt as a community of faith. Our purpose, to deepen our faith, strengthen our bonds, and empower each other in Christ's love, remains steadfast and is the driving force behind this extraordinary event.

We can't wait to see you in Memphis for this extraordinary Fall Retreat!

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christy N. Scruggs".

Dr. Christy N. Scruggs

West Area Spiritual Journey

We Belong Together!

I was fortunate enough along with TDWM President Etta Harris, Secretary Evelyn Harris, and Rev. Dr. Lillie Matlock, to attend the 28th Biennial Session of the National Convocation of the Christian Church. The Convocation was held in Greensboro, North Carolina July 11-14, 2024, and ladies this was my first Convocation and it did not disappoint. Rev. Dr. Alvin O. Jackson opened the convention with a call-to-action sermon on the first night. There was a Disciples Women's luncheon held on that Saturday which was hosted by Disciples Women (DW) President Rev. Claudette President. We were able to attend workshops, meet other disciples women from across the region and witness the installation of Rev. Dr. Delesslyn A. Kennebrew as the Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation. This was a time of Renewing and Reviving our spirits. It was a Call to Action.

The first planning session for the West Area Spiritual Journey, 2025 was held on September 10, 2024, The official kick off meeting for the Spiritual Journey 2025, was attended by all the West Area District Liaison Brenda Crawford, Jeanne Cleveland, Ginger Quarry, and Laverne Jackson, along with TDWM President Etta Harris. We have initiated contact with our host church, and we are standing in prayer for the Spirit led Vision and as we pursue our Goal of uniting and inspiring one another, in preparation for Spiritual Journey 2025. The West Area Spiritual Journey will be held in March 2025. **So Save the Date. ...March 2025!**

Our Service Project for the West Area TDWM is Room in the Inn (RITI). They provide shelter for the homeless and recuperative care for the unhoused in Shelby County. A Wishlist of Items frequently needed by RITI is located on their website (ritimemphis.org) and includes not only household cleaning products but infant formula, diapers, and baby wipes. We have started collecting these items and announcements have been made in our women's groups so that we can increase our giving capacity. It is our objective to increase the number of women participants in Spiritual Journey 2025 by 25%. Thereby increasing the impact to our community and encompassing more Disciples of Christ Women to get involved in the ministry. We Belong Together! We want to reach the next generation of disciples women and beyond as we look to the future generation of disciples women. It is our Goal to continue Cultivating a Community of Compassion and to be a Light in the darkness for ourselves and others. John 8:12 (NIV) -When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said. "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of Life.

By His Grace,
Lori Franklin,
TDWM West Area Coordinator





Greeting Disciples Women!

To quote English author, Joseph Addison, “Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.” Just as we reap benefits by exercising whether walking, running, tai chi, dancing or chair yoga, our time of study - individually and in our groups strengthens us spiritually, and grows body, mind and soul to the glory of God.

A few study recommendations you may want to explore are listed below.

[The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World](#), by John Comer

[Habits of the Household: Practicing the Story of God in Every day Family Rhythms](#), by Justin Whitmel Earley

[Practicing the Way: Be with Jesus, Become Like Him, Do As He Did](#), by John Comer

AND NOTE,



Pre-sales for *Just Women* have begun! *Just Women* is the official Bible Study resource for Disciples Women’s Ministries. It is published annually and is comprised of bible studies and articles that provide relevant information and sustainable tools of faith and ministry for its readers. Writing contributions are sourced from denominational staff, lay and clergywomen across the denomination, and ecumenical partners.

As a transgenerational resource, this study is designed for individual, group, ministry, and/or congregational studies. To order the 2025 Bible Study Edition go to

<https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/product/2025-just-women-bible-study-pre-orders/>

A HEART FOR SERVICE

And do not forget to do good and to share with others for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:16

Saluting the generous, compassionate Disciples Women across our great state who do kindness, share with others, thus meeting needs great and small with the grace and love that God has entrusted to us.

The Middle Area Disciples Women’s service project for the next two years is Safe Haven Family Shelter. Safe Haven is a shelter-to-housing program in middle Tennessee that accommodates families experiencing homelessness. Safe Haven Family Shelter relies on donations of essential household items from supporters to help make the families feel at home while in the shelter and as they move into their own housing.

The West Area Disciples Women’s service project for the next two year is Room In The Inn (RITI). In support of Room In The Inn the West Area Disciples Women provide supplies, bus passes, partner with host churches and donate Christmas gifts.

I look forward to seeing 150 Tennessee Disciples Women come together at Regional Assembly!

Peace and blessings,

Lillie Wiggins

Legislation

Beyond 2024. Reflecting on the Political Landscape: Key Issues and Spiritual Implications

By: Kieya D. Griffith



Whew! Is there anyone besides me, who is waiting for this political season to be over? It seems with every year, with each election, my tolerance for campaign promises, slanderous comments, sideline social media commentators, propagating advertisements, cheap shots and the lack of personal decency is quiet nauseating. When will it end? Let's make personal integrity matter again! As Christians, we are called to engage with the world around us while maintaining a Christ-centered perspective. What would Jesus do? What would Jesus say? With the upcoming 2024 elections, several pivotal events and issues have emerged that will shape the direction of our nation. The dilemma that rests at the ballot box, after every vote is cast and counted, will we be a nation United? Or further divided?

What's Been Going On?

There have been some significant political changes that have occurred over the past two years, but more specifically, in the last six months. Let's explore some and their spiritual and moral significance.

Major Political Events and Decisions

Supreme Court Decisions

The Supreme Court has handed down several key rulings in 2024. One of the most significant was a decision related to affirmative action in higher education, scaling back policies that have long sought to address racial inequality in college admissions. Another ruling related to religious liberty has strengthened protections for individuals and businesses to practice their faith without government interference, a decision warmly received by many Christian communities. Most recently, the Supreme Court, ruled that a president is entitled to "presumptive immunity from all prosecution for actions while carrying out official acts."

However, other rulings, such as those dealing with environmental regulations and voting rights, have sparked considerable debate about the role of government in societal stewardship and the balance between individual freedom and collective responsibility. Question: Do you know where your birth certificate or certificate of naturalization? You very well may need it to prove you are a legal citizen of legal age to vote. More to come regarding this.

Key Issues on the Ballot

Gun Reform

In the aftermath of the heartbreaking events on September 4, 2024, at Apalachee High School in Winder, Georgia, where two teachers and two students tragically lost their lives, the urgency of gun reform remains at the forefront of both local and national discussions. Since the devastating University of Texas Tower shooting in 1966, where 16 lives were lost and 31 others injured, the United States has endured more than 19 notable school shootings. These tragedies have resulted in 191 fatalities and over 170 wounded, a grim reminder of the toll that gun violence has exacted on our educational institutions.

While definitions of what constitutes a "mass shooting" vary, and comprehensive lists remain elusive, the loss is undeniable. School shootings have deeply scarred our communities, but they are not confined to schools alone. Nine significant mass shootings at places of worship have claimed over 60 lives, leaving more than 50 wounded. Events like the Las Vegas shooting in 2017, where 60 innocent concertgoers were killed, are too numerous to fully catalog here.

The issue of gun reform transcends political lines and demands more than a debate over the Second Amendment. It is, at its core, a matter of public safety and human dignity. While political parties have often taken opposing stances—Democrats advocating for stricter firearm regulations and Republicans emphasizing constitutional rights—the moral imperative is clear. As people of faith, we must weigh personal liberty against the sanctity of life.

Legislation

How many more lives must be lost before we act decisively for the common good? Many of these acts of violence are driven by hate, racism, and xenophobia. I ask again: What would Jesus do? What would Jesus say? I believe He would call for compassionate and wise solutions that prioritize the protection and well-being of all. The epidemic of gun violence in our society demands that we act with moral clarity and a deep sense of responsibility. Christians should hold, especially regarding caring for others and promoting peace, can be found in Romans 12:18:

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

Immigration Reform

"The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus, is a poem which reads, *"Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

These words were inscribed on the Statue of Liberty's pedestal in 1903. The poem symbolizes the United States as a beacon of hope and opportunity for immigrants.

Immigration reform remains a divisive issue, with both parties offering starkly different solutions. Democrats desire seek to create pathways to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, increase refugee admissions, and provide protections for DACA recipients. In contrast, Republicans have called for stricter border control, more enforcement of existing laws, and a reduction in illegal immigration. For the Christian voter, the immigration debate should center on Biblical calls to care for the foreigner and the marginalized (Leviticus 19:34), while also recognizing the need for national security and legal order and proper constitutional process.

Abortion and Pro-Life Policies

With the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, abortion continues to be one of the most heated topics in American politics. States have taken divergent paths, with some enacting near-total bans and others codifying abortion rights. Both parties have made this issue central to their platforms, with Democrats advocating for reproductive rights and Republicans championing pro-life governmental regulations. Christians are deeply divided on this issue. Perhaps this is because we attempt to narrow the importance of the issues of life and the quality there of to the birthing table. Do we only concern ourselves with protecting the sanctity of life? How do we protect pro-life agendas and sustain the quality of life beyond the labor room?

If life begins at conception, it certainly does not end beyond the delivery room. Where are the policies that protect and provide for all Americans to grow and become viable, productive citizens in American Society.

Economic Policy

The economic crisis, characterized by rising inflation and the threat of recession, demands immediate attention. America cannot continue to prioritize foreign interests and allies at the expense of its own citizens. We must establish a sustainable economic framework that ensures the well-being of our people.

While both Democrats and Republicans offer valuable proposals, a balanced approach is crucial. Democrats advocate for increased government spending, while Republicans prioritize tax cuts and deregulation. As Christians, we understand that economic policy is not solely about personal prosperity. It must also reflect our values of justice, generosity, and compassion for the most vulnerable, as Jesus taught in Matthew 25:35-40.

Spiritual and Moral Implications of the 2024 Election

As Christians, our faith should compel us to reflect on the deeper moral and spiritual issues at stake in this election. The 2024 ballot presents choices that go beyond political affiliations, and public influencers and touch on core values of justice, mercy, stewardship and human decency. Gun violence, immigration, economic inequality, the sanctity of life, and religious liberty are not just political issues—they are spiritual ones, challenging us to align our votes with our convictions as followers of Jesus, who teaches the greatest commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 23:37-40). This passage emphasizes that love for God and others is the highest priority, surpassing any rules or systems that disregard human well-being.

The prophet Micah reminds us that God calls us "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). As we consider the candidates and policies before us, we must weigh not only their political implications but their alignment with these Biblical values. The call to care for the poor, protect the vulnerable, and seek justice for all should guide us as we discern our role in this election. For the Bible condemns those who create policies that exploit or harm vulnerable people, emphasizing that justice and care for others should guide our decision-making (*See Isaiah 10:1-2*).

In conclusion, as we approach the November 2024 election, we must remember our Christian duty to engage thoughtfully and prayerfully. Regardless of the political affiliations we hold or personality we prefer, our ultimate allegiance is to the Kingdom of God, where justice, mercy, and love reign supreme. Let us vote not out of fear or partisanship, but out of a deep desire to see God's will done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). May we seek to be salt and light in this political season, witnessing to the world the hope, the love, the mercy and the justice we have all found in Christ Jesus.

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

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH DISCIPLES OF CHRIST
IN TENNESSEE

2024 REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

OUR WORLD:

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIGHT

Ephesians 2:10
"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

2024

OUR WORLD: THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIGHT

Please Complete One Registration Form Per Adult or Child

Full Name _____ Church Home/TN Region _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ E-mail _____

Any Special Accommodations Required, if yes please specify _____

Event Registration Costs:

\$50 Adults \$25 Youth (12 yrs & up) Includes Saturday Lunch

\$15 Children (11 yrs & under) Includes Saturday Lunch

Meal Costs: Meal Deadline Sept. 27

Friday, October 11, 2024

\$30 Clergy Luncheon, (Clergy ONLY) Interim Regional Minister Meet & Greet (After Worship- All Invited & No Cost)

\$30 Dinner Buffet (5-7PM)

\$10 Dinner Buffet Ages 11 and under (Children under 6-no charge)

Saturday, October 12, 2024

\$25 Women's Luncheon (Disciples Women Bi-annual Meeting) \$20 Anyone not attending the Women's Luncheon

I require Vegetarian Meals Food Allergies, Please Specify _____

\$ _____ Total Registration and Meals Costs (Please Mail this form with your check for registration and fees to the Regional Office, 4006 Ashland City Highway, Nashville, TN 37218. Make check payable to Christian Church in TN. You may register online at Indisciples.org.

Voting Representative [Local Congregation] Voting Member [Regional Board]

Ordained or Commissioned Minister Youth Voter [Local Congregation]

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS:

A block of rooms have been reserved at a discounted rate. Please make your reservation directly with the hotel & EARLY. Number of rooms are limited.

Questions: regionaloffice@ndisciples.org or call 615-646-3705. Visit www.Indisciples.org